

THE  
RANDOM HOUSE  
Book of  
**POETRY**  
for Children

*A Treasury of 572 Poems  
for Today's Child*

SELECTED BY  
**JACK PRELUTSKY**

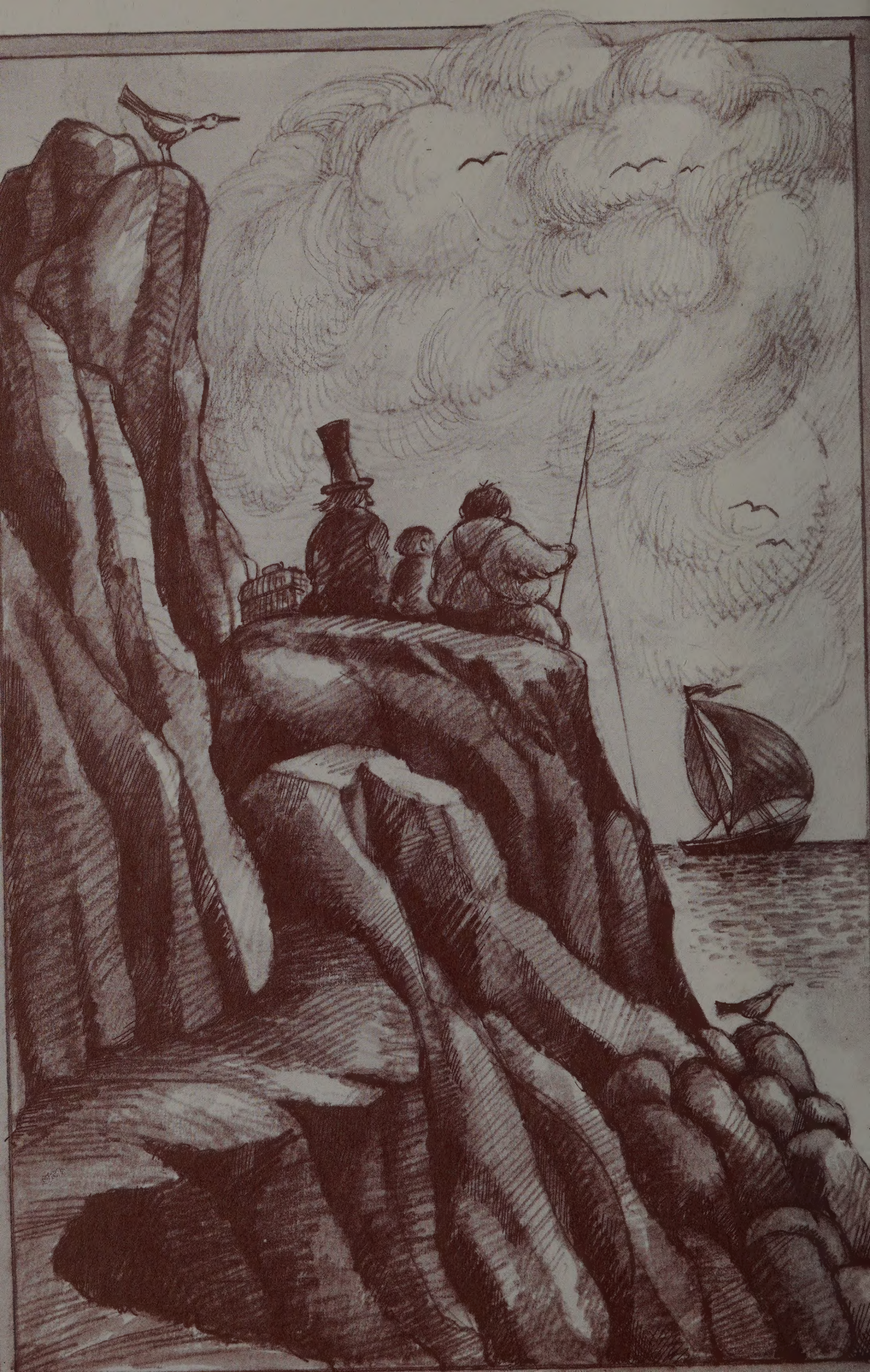
ILLUSTRATED BY  
**ARNOLD LOBEL**





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*Opening Poems for Each Section  
Especially Written for This Anthology  
by Jack Prelutsky*



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## INTRODUCTION

**F**OR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN, responding to poetry is as natural as breathing. Even before they can speak, most babies delight in the playful cadences of nursery rhymes and the soothing rhythms of lullabies. For the toddler, Mother Goose favorites are an integral part of life. Poetry is as delightful and surprising as being tickled or catching a snowflake on a mitten. Young children are fascinated by the visual images of "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." They revel in the rhythms of "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater." And although they may not quite understand the meaning, they are enchanted by the wordplay of "Sing a Song of Sixpence."

But then something happens to this early love affair with poetry. At some point during their school careers, many children seem to lose their interest and enthusiasm for poetry and their easygoing pleasure in its sounds and images. They begin to find poetry boring and irrelevant, too difficult or too dull to bother with.

For the last few years I've been visiting schools, colleges, and libraries throughout the United States and Canada, working directly with children. In reading and reciting poetry to them, I've begun to understand the kinds of poems to which children respond—poems that evoke laughter and delight, poems that cause a palpable ripple of surprise by the unexpected comparisons they make, poems that paint pictures with words that are as vivid as brushstrokes, poems that reawaken pleasure in the sounds and meanings of language. Repeated requests from teachers and librarians to recommend a comprehensive anthology of such poems provided the impetus for *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*.

When I assembled this collection, I decided to focus on poems for elementary school children—the kids I know best. I felt that this group provided a sufficiently wide age range, although there are undoubtedly many poems in the collection that will appeal to preschoolers and others that will please adolescents. There are, however, no nursery rhymes, which my target audience might find babyish; nor are there poems that specifically cater to such adolescent concerns as romantic love (and acne). Parents and teachers of preschoolers, therefore, should be selective in using the book. A poem that might be deliciously scary for an eight-year-old might be terrifying to a four-year-old. My criteria for selecting poems were rhythm, rhyme, and imagery that did not sacrifice clarity of meaning. I looked for poems that deal with topics of interest to children in a way that delights the ear. I have avoided many of the "inspirational" and the long narrative poems that are so often included in other anthologies because they no longer seem relevant to today's children, morally uplifting though they may have been to earlier generations. On the other hand, I have included such writers as Lewis



Carroll and A. A. Milne because their magic with words withstands the test of time. While most of the poets represented are primarily children's poets, there are some poems by poets who are generally considered "adult" poets, such as Robert Frost, Christopher Morley, and John Updike. Sometimes these poets wrote an occasional poem for children; other times their poetry has a beautiful simplicity that makes it appealing and meaningful to both children and adults. Quite frankly, I tried to fill this book with poems I believe *elementary school children* will like. While there are many poignant and serious poems in the collection, the accent is on humor and light verse.

During the last thirty or forty years there has been a renaissance in children's poetry. Many of the best children's poets who ever wrote are writing today. Such contemporary writers as Aileen Fisher, John Ciardi, Lilian Moore, Dennis Lee, and Shel Silverstein, to name a handful, are creating children's poetry that is relevant, understandable, and thoroughly enjoyable. Such poets, unlike some of their pedantic predecessors, do not set out to educate children in a way that will make them more socially acceptable to adult company. They write from the child within themselves for "other" children, using the technical skills and insights of mature artists. Not unlike artists who create work for adults, they shape the way reality is perceived. They enrich daily experience. Who can see a field of blazing sunflowers and not remember them as Van Gogh painted them? Try reading Lilian Moore's "Until I Saw the Sea," for example, before your next excursion to the beach. Then you, too, will see the sea breathe "in and out" when you watch the surf. After reading John Ciardi's "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast," when some child receives a waffle that looks "like a manhole cover," the experience will have a universality, a special element of humor, that it would not have had without the child's experiencing the poem. Unlike the poems in many other "comprehensive" anthologies, two thirds of the poems in this collection were first published during the past four decades.

As the table of contents shows, I have divided the anthology into fourteen broad sections. In addition to the table of contents and the usual indexes of author, title, and first line, I have included a subject index. I hope that it will prove valuable, especially to teachers, who can use it to add the fun and beauty of poetry to subjects in the school curriculum and to events during the year.

I am especially delighted that Arnold Lobel, a Caldecott Award winner, agreed to illustrate the collection. It is difficult to imagine a child looking at these illustrations and not wanting to read the poems! I hope that our combined efforts will introduce children everywhere to many new, wonderful, and unexpected ways of looking at the world.

JACK PRELUTSKY

*Albuquerque, New Mexico*  
*April 1983*





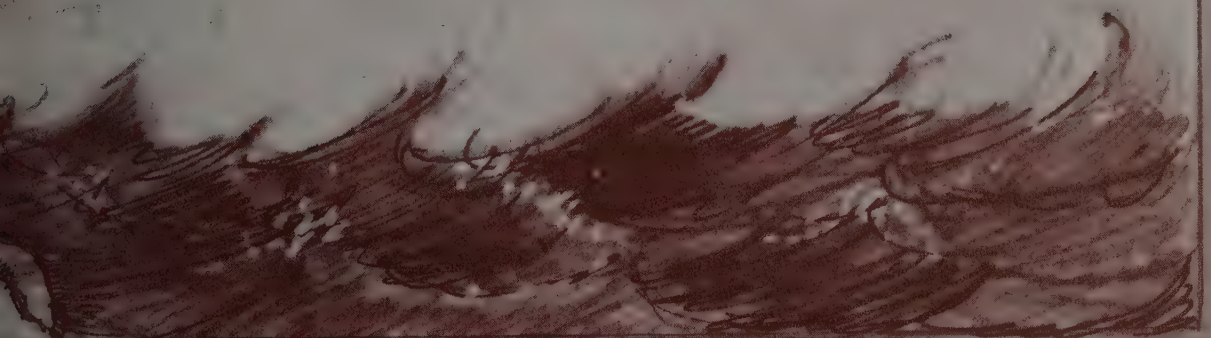
# NATURE IS

*Nature is the endless sky,  
the sun of golden light,  
a cloud that floats serenely by,  
the silver moon of night.*

*Nature is a sandy dune,  
a tall and stately tree,  
the waters of a clear lagoon,  
the billows on the sea.*

*Nature is a gentle rain  
and winds that howl and blow,  
a thunderstorm, a hurricane,  
a silent field of snow.*

*Nature is a tranquil breeze  
and pebbles on a shore.  
Nature's each and all of these  
and infinitely more.*





### Auguries of Innocence

To see a World in a grain of sand,  
And a Heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And Eternity in an hour.

*William Blake*

### I'm Glad the Sky Is Painted Blue

I'm glad the sky is painted blue,  
And the earth is painted green,  
With such a lot of nice fresh air  
All sandwiched in between.

*Anonymous*

### The Universe

There is the moon, there is the sun  
Round which we circle every year,  
And there are all the stars we see  
On starry nights when skies are clear,  
And all the countless stars that lie  
Beyond the reach of human eye.  
If every bud on every tree,  
All birds and fireflies and bees  
And all the flowers that bloom and die  
Upon the earth were counted up,  
The number of the stars would be  
Greater, they say, than all of these.

*Mary Britton Miller*

### All Things Bright and Beautiful

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,  
Each little bird that sings,  
He made their glowing colors,  
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,  
The river running by,  
The sunset, and the morning,  
That brightens up the sky;

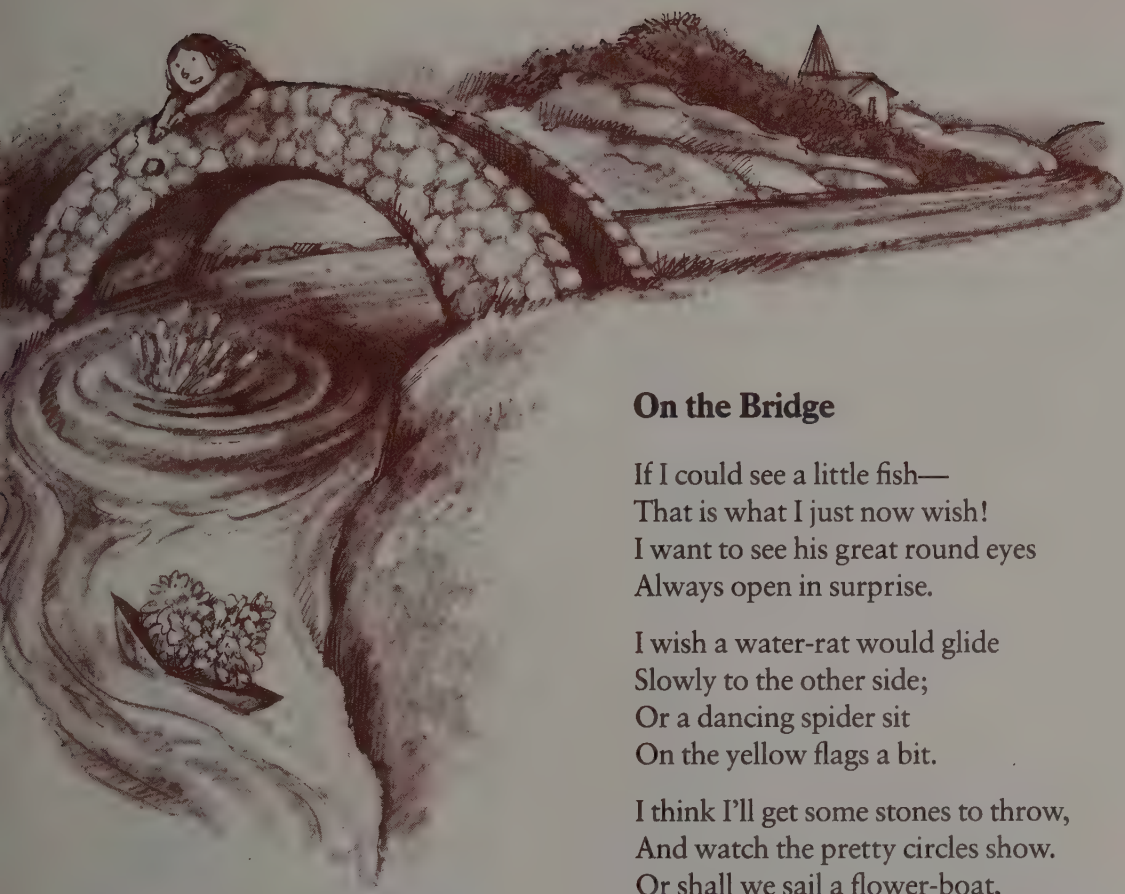
The cold wind in the winter,  
The pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,  
And lips that we might tell,  
How great is God Almighty,  
Who has made all things well.

*Cecil Frances Alexander*







## Measurement

Stars and atoms have no size,  
They only vary in men's eyes.

Men and instruments will blunder  
Calculating things of wonder.

A seed is just as huge a world  
As any ball the sun has hurled.

Stars are quite as picayune  
As any splinter of the moon.

Time is but a vague device;  
Space can never be precise;

Stars and atoms have a girth,  
Small as zero, ten times Earth.

There is, by God's swift reckoning  
A universe in everything.

*A. M. Sullivan*

## On the Bridge

If I could see a little fish—  
That is what I just now wish!  
I want to see his great round eyes  
Always open in surprise.

I wish a water-rat would glide  
Slowly to the other side;  
Or a dancing spider sit  
On the yellow flags a bit.

I think I'll get some stones to throw,  
And watch the pretty circles show.  
Or shall we sail a flower-boat,  
And watch it slowly—slowly float?

That's nice—because you never know  
How far away it means to go;  
And when tomorrow comes, you see,  
It may be in the great wide sea.

*Kate Greenaway*

## Flint

An emerald is as green as grass,  
A ruby red as blood;  
A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;  
A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,  
To catch the world's desire;  
An opal holds a fiery spark;  
But a flint holds fire.

*Christina Rossetti*

## The Secret Song

Who saw the petals  
drop from the rose?  
I, said the spider,  
But nobody knows.

Who saw the sunset  
flash on a bird?  
I, said the fish,  
But nobody heard.

Who saw the fog  
come over the sea?  
I, said the sea pigeon,  
Only me.

Who saw the first  
green light of the sun?  
I, said the night owl,  
The only one.

Who saw the moss  
creep over the stone?  
I, said the gray fox,  
All alone.

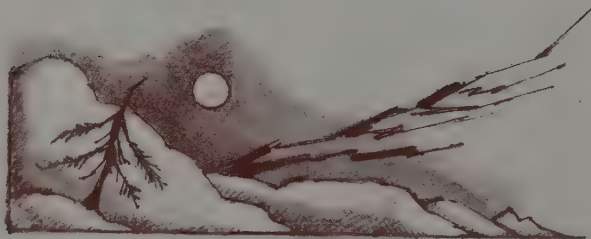
*Margaret Wise Brown*

## The Wolf Cry

The Arctic moon hangs overhead;  
The wide white silence lies below.  
A starveling pine stands lone and gaunt,  
Black-penciled on the snow.

Weird as the moan of sobbing winds,  
A lone long call floats up from the trail;  
And the naked soul of the frozen North  
Trembles in that wail.

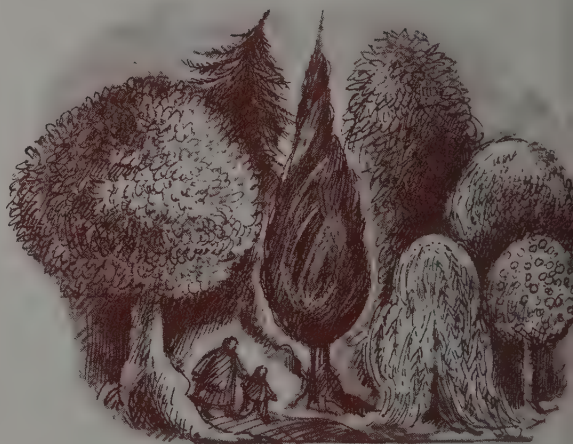
*Lew Sarett*



## Last Rites

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,  
Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush—  
Weave him a coffin of rush,  
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,  
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

*Christina Rossetti*



## Trees

The Oak is called the king of trees,  
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,  
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,  
The Peach tree spreads along the wall,  
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,  
The Willow droops in watery glade,  
The Fir tree useful timber gives,  
The Beech amid the forest lives.

*Sara Coleridge*



## The Crocus

The golden crocus reaches up  
To catch a sunbeam in her cup.

*Walter Crane*



## Birch Trees

The night is white,  
The moon is high,  
The birch trees lean  
Against the sky.

The cruel winds  
Have blown away  
Each little leaf  
Of silver gray.

O lonely trees  
As white as wool . . .  
That moonlight makes  
So beautiful.

*John Richard Moreland*

## The Ferns

High, high in the branches  
the seawinds plunge and roar.  
A storm is moving westward,  
but here on the forest floor  
the ferns have captured stillness.  
A green sea growth they are.

The ferns lie underwater  
in a light of the forest's green.  
Their motion is like stillness,  
as if water shifts between  
and a great storm quivers  
through fathoms of green.

*Gene Baro*

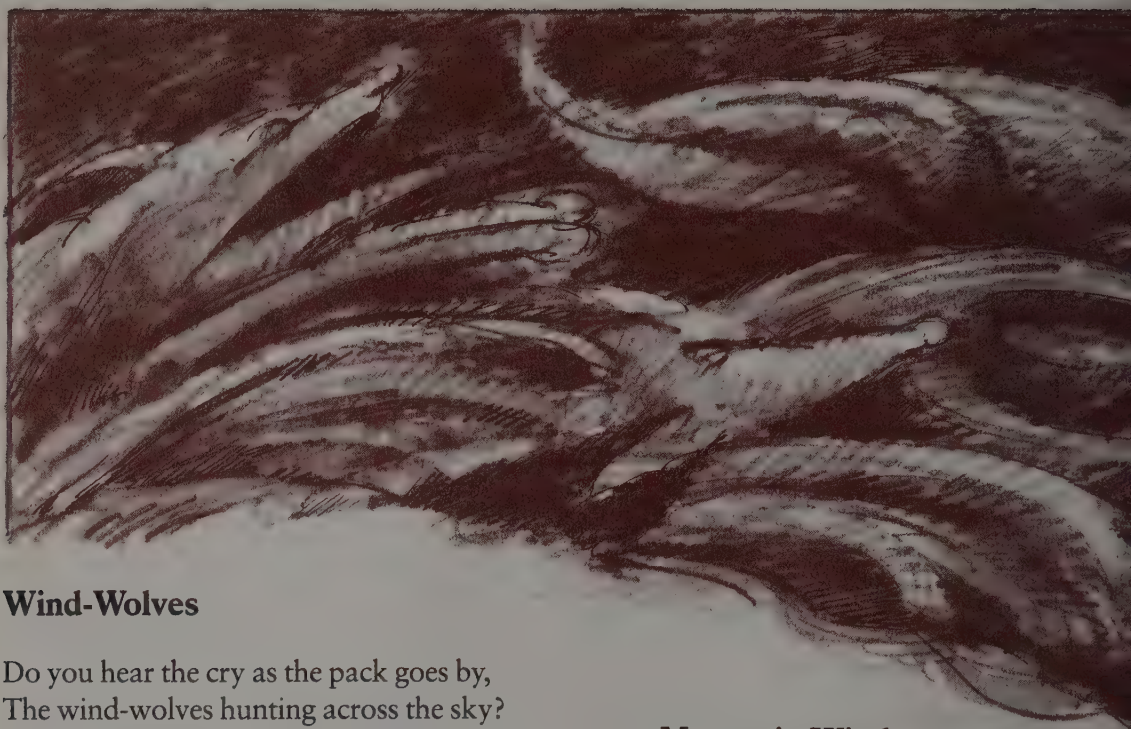


## Dandelion

O little soldier with the golden helmet,  
What are you guarding on my lawn?  
You with your green gun  
And your yellow beard,  
Why do you stand so stiff?  
There is only the grass to fight!

*Hilda Conkling*





## Wind-Wolves

Do you hear the cry as the pack goes by,  
The wind-wolves hunting across the sky?  
Hear them tongue it, keen and clear,  
Hot on the flanks of the flying deer!

Across the forest, mere, and plain,  
Their hunting howl goes up again!  
All night they'll follow the ghostly trail,  
All night we'll hear their phantom wail,

For tonight the wind-wolf pack holds sway  
From Pegasus Square to the Milky Way,  
And the frightened bands of cloud-deer flee  
In scattered groups of two and three.

*William D. Sargent*

## Mountain Wind

Windrush down the timber chutes  
between the mountain's knees—  
a hiss of distant breathing,  
a shouting in the trees,  
a recklessness of branches,  
a wilderness a-sway,  
when suddenly

a silence  
takes your breath away.

*Barbara Kunz Loots*

## ✓ The Wind

I can get through a doorway without any key,  
And strip the leaves from the great oak tree.

I can drive storm-clouds and shake tall towers,  
Or steal through a garden and not wake the flowers.

Seas I can move and ships I can sink;  
I can carry a house-top or the scent of a pink.

When I am angry I can rave and riot;  
And when I am spent, I lie quiet as quiet.

*James Reeves*





## Windy Nights

Whenever the moon and stars are set,  
Whenever the wind is high,  
All night long in the dark and wet,  
A man goes riding by.  
Late in the night when the fires are out,  
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,  
And ships are tossed at sea,  
By, on the highway, low and loud,  
By at the gallop goes he;  
By at the gallop he goes, and then  
By he comes back at the gallop again.

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

## Who Has Seen the Wind?

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you:  
But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I:  
But when the leaves bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.

*Christina Rossetti*

## Mountain Brook

Because of the steepness,  
the streamlet runs white,  
narrow and broken  
as lightning by night.

Because of the rocks,  
it leaps this way and that,  
fresh as a flower,  
quick as a cat.

*Elizabeth Coatsworth*

## River Winding

Rain falling, what things do you grow?  
Snow melting, where do you go?  
Wind blowing, what trees do you know?  
River winding, where do you flow?

*Charlotte Zolotow*

## Mud

Mud is very nice to feel  
All squishy-squash between the toes!  
I'd rather wade in wiggly mud  
Than smell a yellow rose.

Nobody else but the rosebush knows  
How nice mud feels  
Between the toes.

*Polly Chase Boyden*

## The Muddy Puddle

I am sitting  
In the middle  
Of a rather Muddy  
Puddle,  
With my bottom  
Full of bubbles  
And my rubbers  
Full of Mud,

While my jacket  
And my sweater  
Go on slowly  
Getting wetter  
As I very  
Slowly settle  
To the Bottom  
Of the Mud.

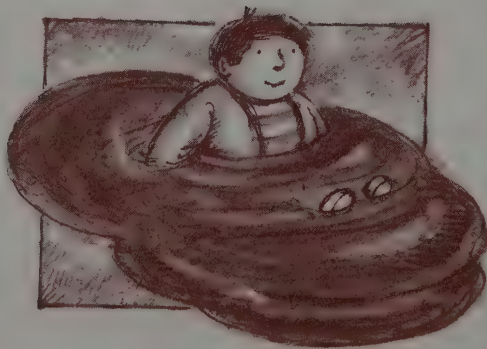
And I find that  
What a person  
With a puddle  
Round his middle  
Thinks of mostly  
In the muddle  
Is the Muddi-  
Ness of Mud.

*Dennis Lee*

## Water's Edge

Wave swashes  
foam splashes  
ripple swishes  
backwashes  
dead fishes  
and pools  
with little live ones  
deliciously  
going about their business.

*Lillian Morrison*





## Sea Shell

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,  
Sing me a song, O please!  
A song of ships, and sailor men,  
And parrots, and tropical trees,  
Of islands lost in the Spanish Main  
Which no man ever may find again,  
Of fishes and corals under the waves,  
And sea horses stabled in great green caves.  
Sea Shell, Sea Shell,  
Sing of the things you know so well.

*Amy Lowell*



## The Sea

Behold the wonders of the mighty deep,  
Where crabs and lobsters learn to creep,  
And little fishes learn to swim,  
And clumsy sailors tumble in.

*Anonymous*

## Until I Saw the Sea

Until I saw the sea  
I did not know  
that wind  
could wrinkle water so.

I never knew  
that sun  
could splinter a whole sea of blue.

Nor  
did I know before,  
a sea breathes in and out  
upon a shore.

*Lilian Moore*

## The Rain Has Silver Sandals

The rain has silver sandals  
For dancing in the spring,  
And shoes with golden tassels  
For summer's frolicking.  
Her winter boots have hobnails  
Of ice from heel to toe,  
Which now and then she changes  
For moccasins of snow.

*May Justus*

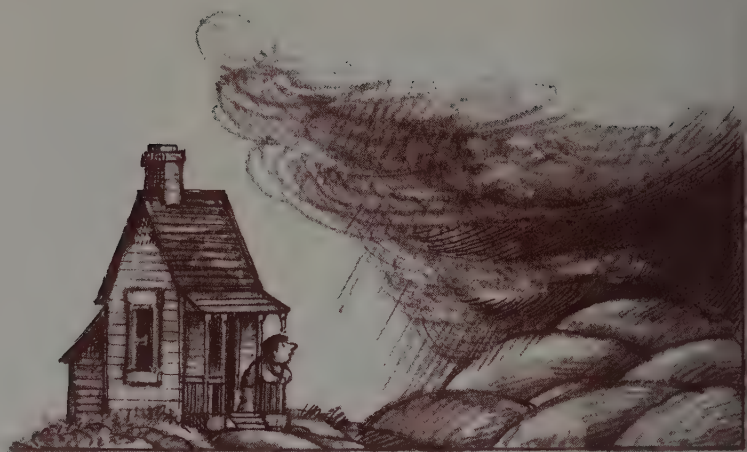


## The More It Snows

The more it  
SNOWS-tiddely-pom,  
The more it  
GOES-tiddely-pom  
The more it  
GOES-tiddely-pom  
On  
Snowing.

And nobody  
KNOWS-tiddely-pom,  
How cold my  
TOES-tiddely-pom  
How cold my  
TOES-tiddely-pom  
Are  
Growing.

*A. A. Milne*



## Rhyme

I like to see a thunder storm,  
A dunder storm,  
A blunder storm,  
I like to see it, black and slow,  
Come stumbling down the hills.

I like to hear a thunder storm,  
A plunder storm,  
A wonder storm,  
Roar loudly at our little house  
And shake the window sills!

*Elizabeth Coatsworth*

## Rain Clouds

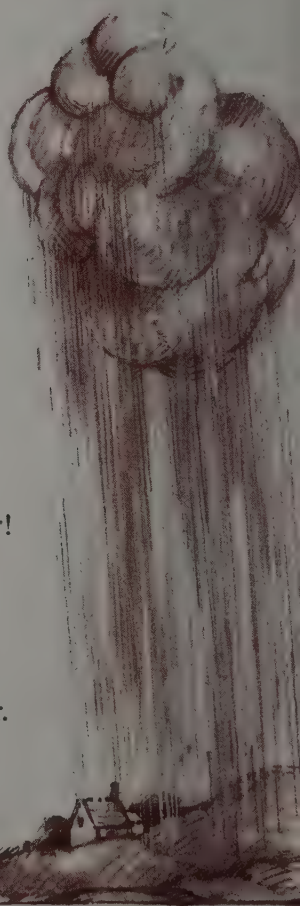
Along a road  
Not built by man  
There winds a silent  
Caravan  
Of camel-clouds  
Whose humped gray backs  
Are weighted down  
With heavy packs  
Of long-awaited,  
Precious rain  
To make the old earth  
Young again,  
And dress her shabby  
Fields and hills  
In green grass silk  
With wild-flower frills.

*Elizabeth-Ellen Long*

## To Walk in Warm Rain

To walk in warm rain  
And get wetter and wetter!  
To do it again—  
To walk in warm rain  
Till you drip like a drain.  
To walk in warm rain  
And get wetter and wetter.

*David McCord*





## When All the World Is Full of Snow

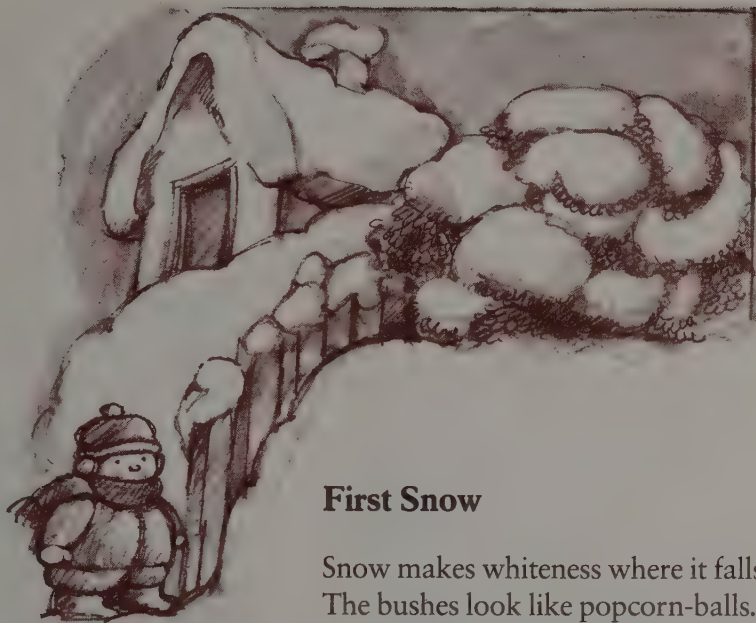
I never know  
just where to go,  
when all the world  
is full of snow.

I do not want  
to make a track,  
not even  
to the shed and back.

I only want  
to watch and wait,  
while snow moths settle  
on the gate,  
and swarming frost flakes  
fill the trees  
with billions  
of albino bees.

I only want  
myself to be  
as silent as  
a winter tree,  
to hear the swirling  
stillness grow,  
when all the world  
is full of snow.

*N. M. Bodecker*



## First Snow

Snow makes whiteness where it falls.  
The bushes look like popcorn-balls.  
And places where I always play,  
Look like somewhere else today.

*Marie Louise Allen*

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

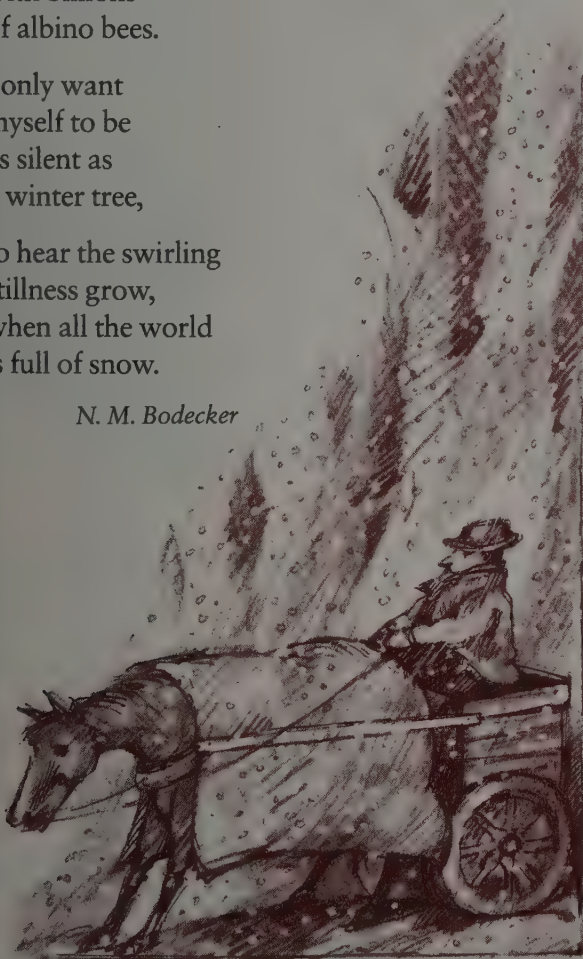
Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.  
And miles to go before I sleep.

*Robert Frost*



## Check

The Night was creeping on the ground!  
She crept, and did not make a sound

Until she reached the tree: And then  
She covered it, and stole again

Along the grass beside the wall!  
—I heard the rustling of her shawl

As she threw blackness everywhere  
Along the sky, the ground, the air,

And in the room where I was hid!  
But, no matter what she did

To everything that was without,  
She could not put my candle out!

So I stared at the Night! And she  
Stared back solemnly at me!

*James Stephens*

## The Snowflake

Before I melt,  
Come, look at me!  
This lovely icy filigree!  
Of a great forest  
In one night  
I make a wilderness  
Of white:  
By skyey cold  
Of crystals made,  
All softly, on  
Your finger laid,  
I pause, that you  
My beauty see:  
Breathe, and I vanish  
Instantly.

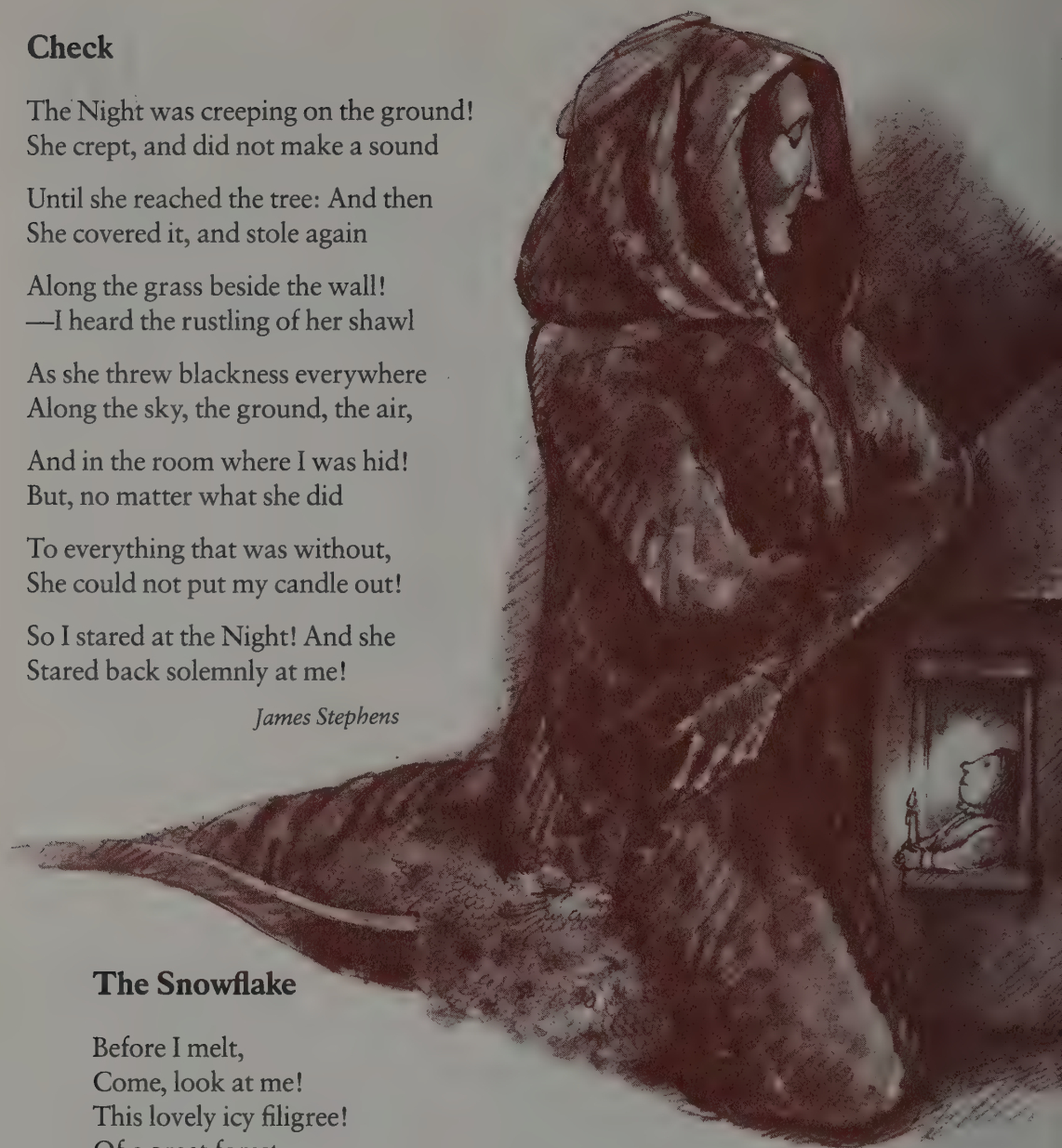
*Walter de la Mare*

## The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky.  
He bites it, day by day,  
Until there's but a rim of scraps  
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker.  
He kneads clouds in his den,  
And bakes a crisp new moon *that . . . greedy*  
*North . . . Wind . . . eats . . . again!*

*Vachel Lindsay*





## Night Comes . . .

Night comes  
leaking  
out of the sky.

Stars come  
peeking.

Moon comes  
sneaking,  
silvery-sly.

Who is  
shaking,  
shivery-  
quaking?

Who is afraid  
of the night?

Not I.

*Beatrice Schenk de Regniers*

## Night

The night is coming softly, slowly;  
Look, it's getting hard to see.

Through the windows,  
Through the door,  
Pussyfooting  
On the floor,  
Dragging shadows,  
Crawling,  
Creeping,

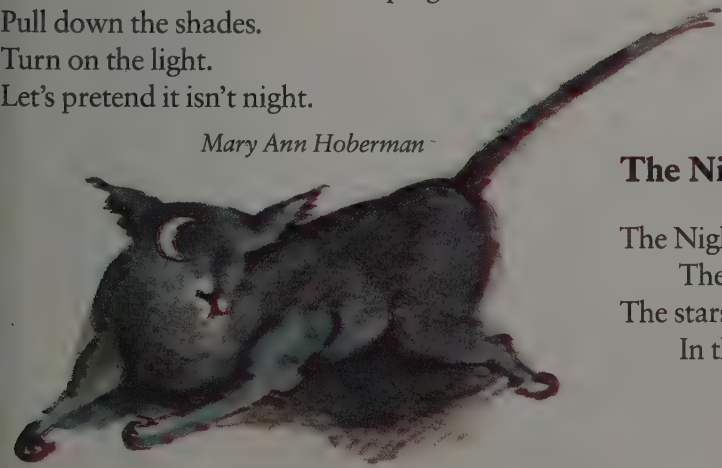
Soon it will be time for sleeping.

Pull down the shades.

Turn on the light.

Let's pretend it isn't night.

*Mary Ann Hoberman*



## The Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark,  
Lights the traveler in the dark—  
Though I know not what you are,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

*Jane Taylor*

## Silver

Slowly, silently, now the moon  
Walks the night in her silver shoon;  
This way, and that, she peers, and sees  
Silver fruit upon silver trees;  
One by one the casements catch  
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;  
Couched in his kennel, like a log,  
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;  
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep  
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;  
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,  
With silver claws, and silver eye;  
And moveless fish in the water gleam,  
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

*Walter de la Mare*

## The Night Is a Big Black Cat

The Night is a big black cat  
The Moon is her topaz eye,  
The stars are the mice she hunts at night,  
In the field of the sultry sky.

*G. Orr Clark*





# THE FOUR SEASONS

## *Summer*

*The earth is warm, the sun's ablaze,  
it is a time of carefree days;  
and bees abuzz that chance to pass  
may see me snoozing on the grass.*

## *Fall*

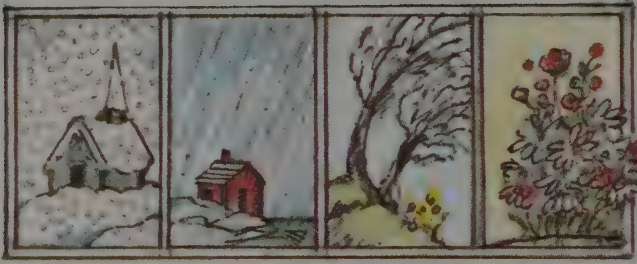
*The leaves are yellow, red, and brown,  
a shower sprinkles softly down;  
the air is fragrant, crisp, and cool,  
and once again I'm stuck in school.*

## *Winter*

*The birds are gone, the world is white,  
the winds are wild, they chill and bite;  
the ground is thick with slush and sleet,  
and I can barely feel my feet.*

## *Spring*

*The fields are rich with daffodils,  
a coat of clover cloaks the hills,  
and I must dance, and I must sing  
to see the beauty of the spring.*



## Four Seasons

Spring is showery, flowery, bowery.

Summer: hoppy, choppy, poppy.

Autumn: wheezy, sneezy, freezy.

Winter: slippery, drippy, nippy.

*Anonymous*

## The Months

January brings the snow,  
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,  
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes loud and shrill,  
Stirs the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,  
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,  
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,  
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers,  
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,  
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit,  
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant,  
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast,  
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,  
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

*Sara Coleridge*



## January

The days are short,  
The sun a spark  
Hung thin between  
The dark and dark

Fat snowy footsteps  
Track the floor.  
Milk bottles burst  
Outside the door.

The river is  
A frozen place  
Held still beneath  
The trees of lace.

The sky is low.  
The wind is gray.  
The radiator  
Purrs all day.

*John Updike*



## Lincoln

There was a boy of other days,  
A quiet, awkward, earnest lad,  
Who trudged long weary miles to get  
A book on which his heart was set—  
And then no candle had!

He was too poor to buy a lamp  
But very wise in woodmen's ways.  
He gathered seasoned bough and stem,  
And crisping leaf, and kindled them  
Into a ruddy blaze.

Then as he lay full length and read,  
The firelight flickered on his face,  
And etched his shadow on the gloom,  
And made a picture in the room,  
In that most humble place.

The hard years came, the hard years went,  
But, gentle, brave, and strong of will,  
He met them all. And when today  
We see his pictured face, we say,  
"There's light upon it still."

*Nancy Byrd Turner*



## Martin Luther King

Got me a special place  
For Martin Luther King.  
His picture on the wall  
Makes me sing.

I look at it for a long time  
And think of some  
Real good ways  
We will overcome.

*Myra Cohn Livingston*

## Ground Hog Day

Ground Hog sleeps  
All winter  
Snug in his fur,  
Dreams  
Green dreams of  
Grassy shoots,  
Of nicely newly nibbly  
Roots—  
Ah, he starts to  
Stir.  
With drowsy  
Stare  
Looks from his burrow  
Out on fields of  
Snow.  
What's there?  
Oh no.  
His shadow. Oh,  
How sad!  
Six more  
Wintry  
Weeks  
To go.

*Lilian Moore*



## Beyond Winter

Over the winter glaciers  
 I see the summer glow,  
 And through the wild-piled snowdrift  
 The warm rosebuds below.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



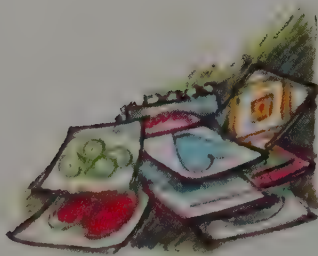
## Ice

When Winter scourged the meadow and the hill  
 And in the withered leafage worked his will,  
 The water shrank, and shuddered, and stood still  
 Then built himself a magic house of glass,  
 Irised with memories of flowers and grass,  
 Wherein to sit and watch the fury pass.

*Charles G. D. Roberts*

## Valentine

I got a valentine from Timmy  
 Jimmy  
 Tillie  
 Billie  
 Nicky  
 Micky  
 Ricky  
 Dicky  
 Laura  
 Nora  
 Cora  
 Flora  
 Donnie  
 Ronnie  
 Lonnie  
 Connie



Eva even sent me two  
 But I didn't get *none* from you.

*Shel Silverstein*





## Smells

Through all the frozen winter  
My nose has grown most lonely  
For lovely, lovely, colored smells  
That come in springtime only.

The purple smell of lilacs,  
The yellow smell that blows  
Across the air of meadows  
Where bright forsythia grows.

The tall pink smell of peach trees,  
The low white smell of clover,  
And everywhere the great green smell  
Of grass the whole world over.

*Kathryn Worth*

## Washington

He played by the river when he was young,  
He raced with rabbits along the hills,  
He fished for minnows, and climbed and swung,  
And hooted back at the whippoorwills.  
Strong and slender and tall he grew—  
And then, one morning, the bugles blew.

Over the hills the summons came,  
Over the river's shining rim.  
He said that the bugles called his name,  
He knew that his country needed him,  
And he answered, "Coming!" and marched away  
For many a night and many a day.

Perhaps when the marches were hot and long  
He'd think of the river flowing by  
Or, camping under the winter sky,  
Would hear the whippoorwill's far-off song.  
Boy or soldier, in peace or strife,  
He loved America all his life!

*Nancy Byrd Turner*

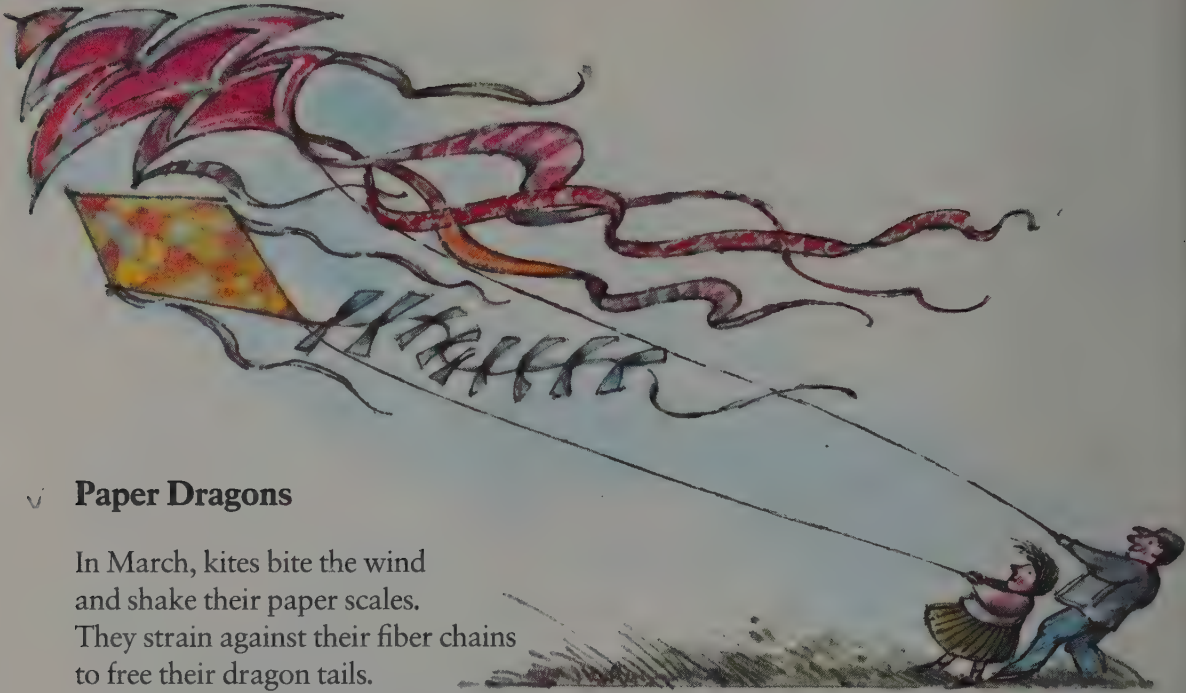


## February Twilight

I stood beside a hill  
Smooth with new-laid snow,  
A single star looked out  
From the cold evening glow.

There was no other creature  
That saw what I could see—  
I stood and watched the evening star  
As long as it watched me.

*Sara Teasdale*



## ✓ Paper Dragons

In March, kites bite the wind  
and shake their paper scales.  
They strain against their fiber chains  
to free their dragon tails.

*Susan Alton Schmeltz*

## When

In February there are days,  
Blue, and nearly warm,  
When horses switch their tails and ducks  
Go quacking through the farm.  
When everything turns round to feel  
The sun upon its back—  
When winter lifts a little bit  
And spring peeks through the crack.

*Dorothy Aldis*

## Maple Feast

Into the bit-flaked sugar-snow  
The crystal-gathering sledges go.  
Stumbling through silver to my knees,  
I shout among the maple trees,  
Tilt gleaming buckets icy cold  
Till I am full as I can hold  
Of clear bright sap, until I feel  
Like a maple tree from head to heel!  
Then to the sugarhouse I run  
Where syrup, golden as the sun,  
Is boiling in the crisp March air  
And I, as daft as a baby bear,  
Eat, till my buttons burst asunder  
From maple sweetness, maple wonder!

*Frances Frost*



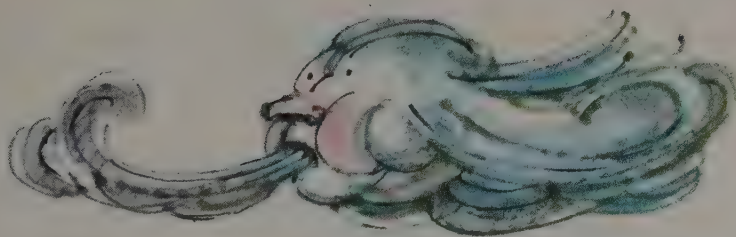


## March

A blue day,  
a blue jay  
and a good beginning.

One crow,  
melting snow—  
spring's winning!

*Elizabeth Coatsworth*



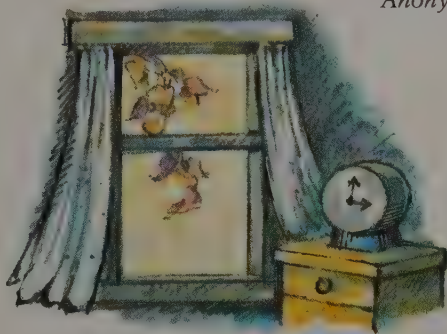
## The March Wind

I come to work as well as play;  
I'll tell you what I do;  
I whistle all the live-long day,  
"Woo-oo-oo-oo! Woo-oo!"

I toss the branches up and down  
And shake them to and fro,  
I whirl the leaves in flocks of brown,  
And send them high and low.

I strew the twigs upon the ground,  
The frozen earth I sweep;  
I blow the children round and round  
And wake the flowers from sleep.

*Anonymous*



## Wearing of the Green

It ought to come in April,  
or, better yet, in May  
when everything is green as green—  
I mean St. Patrick's Day.

With still a week of winter  
this wearing of the green  
seems rather out of season—  
it's rushing things, I mean.

But maybe March is better  
when all is done and said:  
St. Patrick brings a promise,  
a four-leaf-clover promise,  
a green-all-over promise  
of springtime just ahead!

*Aileen Fisher*



## Daylight Saving Time

In Spring when maple buds are red,  
We turn the Clock an hour ahead;  
Which means, each April that arrives,  
We lose an hour  
Out of our lives.

Who cares? When Autumn birds in flocks  
Fly southward, back we turn the Clocks,  
And so regain a lovely thing—  
That missing hour  
We lost last Spring.

*Phyllis McGinley*



### Spring Rain

The storm came up so very quick  
It couldn't have been quicker.  
I should have brought my hat along,  
I should have brought my slicker.

My hair is wet, my feet are wet,  
I couldn't be much wetter.  
I fell into a river once  
But this is even better.

*Marchette Chute*

### Ode to Spring

O spring, O spring,  
You wonderful thing!  
O spring, O spring, O spring!  
O spring, O spring,  
When the birdies sing  
I feel like a king,  
O spring!

*Walter R. Brooks*



### Easter

The air is like a butterfly  
With frail blue wings.  
The happy earth looks at the sky  
And sings.

*Joyce Kilmer*



### Spring Is

Spring is when  
the morning sputters like  
bacon

and  
your  
sneakers  
run  
down  
the  
stairs

so fast you can hardly keep up with them  
and

spring is when  
your scrambled eggs  
jump  
off  
the  
plate

and turn into a million daffodils  
trembling in the sunshine.

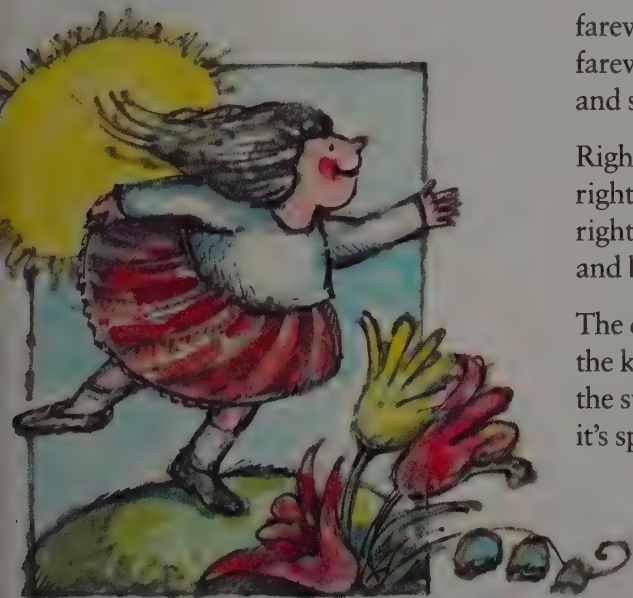
*Bobbi Katz*



## Spring

I'm shouting  
 I'm singing  
 I'm swinging through trees  
 I'm winging sky-high  
 With the buzzing black bees.  
 I'm the sun  
 I'm the moon  
 I'm the dew on the rose.  
 I'm a rabbit  
 Whose habit  
 Is twitching his nose.  
 I'm lively  
 I'm lovely  
 I'm kicking my heels.  
 I'm crying "Come dance"  
 to the freshwater eels.  
 I'm racing through meadows  
 Without any coat  
 I'm a gamboling lamb  
 I'm a light leaping goat  
 I'm a bud  
 I'm a bloom  
 I'm a dove on the wing.  
 I'm running on rooftops  
 And welcoming spring!

*Karla Kuskin*



## On Mother's Day

On Mother's Day we got up first,  
 so full of plans we almost burst.  
 We started breakfast right away  
 as our surprise for Mother's Day.  
 We picked some flowers, then hurried back  
 to make the coffee—rather black.  
 We wrapped our gifts and wrote a card  
 and boiled the eggs—a little hard.  
 And then we sang a serenade,  
 which burned the toast, I am afraid.  
 But Mother said, amidst our cheers,  
 "Oh, what a big surprise, my dears.  
 I've not had such a treat in years."  
 And she was smiling to her ears!

*Aileen Fisher*

## Good-by My Winter Suit

Good-by my winter suit,  
 good-by my hat and boot,  
 good-by my ear-protecting muffs  
 and storms that hail and hoot.

Farewell to snow and sleet,  
 farewell to Cream of Wheat,  
 farewell to ice-removing salt  
 and slush around my feet.

Right on! to daffodils,  
 right on! to whippoorwills,  
 right on! to chirp-producing eggs  
 and baby birds and quills.

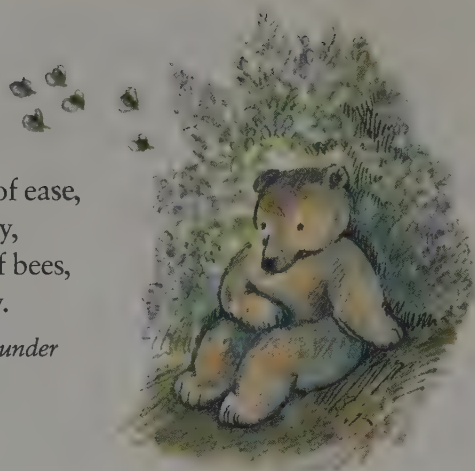
The day is on the wing,  
 the kite is on the string,  
 the sun is where the sun should be—  
 it's spring all right! It's spring!

*N. M. Bodecker*

## Joyful

A summer day is full of ease,  
a bank is full of money,  
our lilac bush is full of bees,  
and I am full of honey.

*Rose Burgunder*



## Maytime Magic

A little seed  
For me to sow . . .

A little earth  
To make it grow . . .  
A little hole,  
A little pat . . .  
A little wish,  
And that is that.

A little sun,  
A little shower . . .  
A little while,  
And then—a flower!

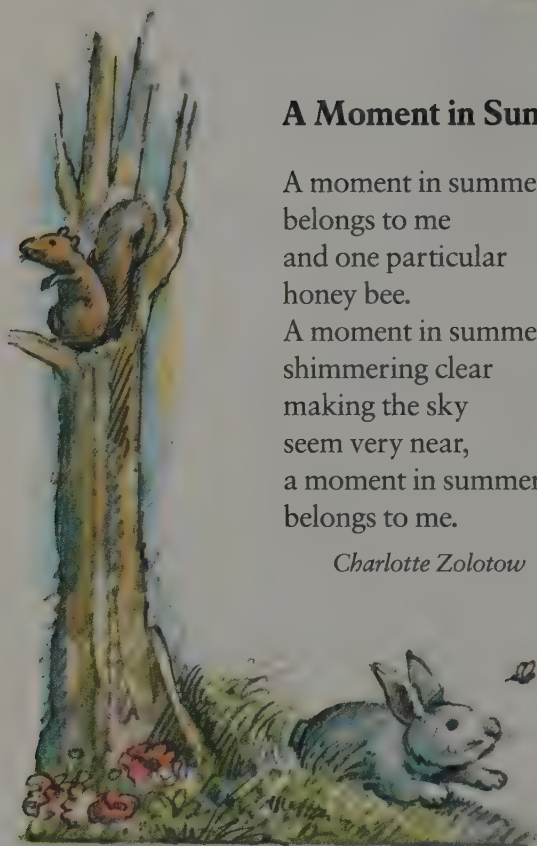
*Mabel Watts*

## A Moment in Summer

A moment in summer  
belongs to me  
and one particular  
honey bee.

A moment in summer  
shimmering clear  
making the sky  
seem very near,  
a moment in summer  
belongs to me.

*Charlotte Zolotow*



## Summer

When it's hot  
I take my shoes off,  
I take my shirt off,  
I take my pants off,  
I take my underwear off,  
I take my whole body off,  
and throw it  
in the river.

*Frank Asch*

## A Rocket in My Pocket

I've got a rocket  
In my pocket;  
I cannot stop to play.  
Away it goes!  
I've burned my toes.  
It's Independence Day.

*Anonymous*





## August

The sprinkler twirls.  
 The summer wanes.  
 The pavement wears  
 Popsicle stains.  
 The playground grass  
 Is worn to dust.  
 The weary swings  
 Creak, creak with rust.  
 The trees are bored  
 With being green.  
 Some people leave  
 The local scene

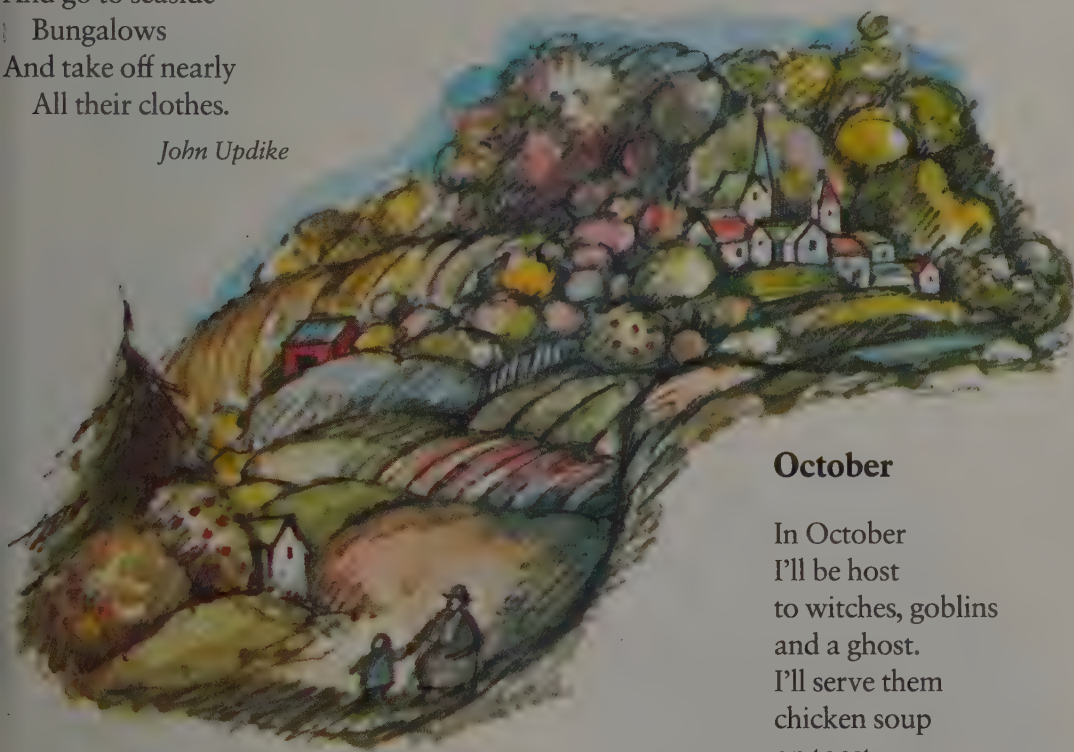
And go to seaside  
 Bungalows  
 And take off nearly  
 All their clothes.

*John Updike*

## Harvest Home

The maples flare among the spruces,  
 The bursting foxglove spills its juices,  
 The gentians lift their sapphire fringes  
 On roadways rich with golden tinges,  
 The waddling woodchucks fill their hampers,  
 The deer mouse runs, the chipmunk scampers,  
 The squirrels scurry, never stopping,  
 For all they hear is apples dropping  
 And walnuts plumping fast and faster;  
 The bee weighs down the purple aster—  
 Yes, hive your honey, little hummer,  
 The woods are waving, "Farewell, Summer."

*Arthur Guiterman*



## October

In October  
 I'll be host  
 to witches, goblins  
 and a ghost.  
 I'll serve them  
 chicken soup  
 on toast.  
 Whoopy once  
 whoopy twice  
 whoopy chicken soup  
 with rice.

*Maurice Sendak*

## October

October turned my maple's leaves to gold;  
 The most are gone now; here and there one lingers.  
 Soon these will slip from out the twig's weak hold,  
 Like coins between a dying miser's fingers.

*Thomas Bailey Aldrich*



## This Is Halloween

Goblins on the doorstep,  
 Phantoms in the air,  
 Owls on witches' gateposts  
 Giving stare for stare,  
 Cats on flying broomsticks,  
 Bats against the moon,  
 Stirrings round of fate-cakes  
 With a solemn spoon,  
 Whirling apple parings,  
 Figures draped in sheets  
 Dodging, disappearing,  
 Up and down the streets,  
 Jack-o'-lanterns grinning,  
 Shadows on a screen,  
 Shrieks and starts and laughter—  
 This is Halloween!

*Dorothy Brown Thompson*

## Lazy Witch

Lazy witch,  
 What's wrong with you?  
 Get up and stir your magic brew.  
 Here's candlelight to chase the gloom.  
 Jump up and mount your flying broom  
 And muster up your charms and spells  
 And wicked grins and piercing yells.  
 It's Halloween! There's work to do!  
 Lazy witch,  
 What's wrong with you?

*Myra Cohn Livingston*



## Thanksgiving Magic

Thanksgiving Day I like to see  
 Our cook perform her witchery.  
 She turns a pumpkin into pie  
 As easily as you or I  
 Can wave a hand or wink an eye.  
 She takes leftover bread and muffin  
 And changes them to turkey stuffin'.  
 She changes cranberries to sauce  
 And meats to stews and stews to broths  
 And when she mixes gingerbread  
 It turns into a man instead  
 With frosting collar 'round his throat  
 And raisin buttons down his coat.  
 Oh, some like magic made by wands,  
 And some read magic out of books,  
 And some like fairy spells and charms  
 But I like magic made by cooks!

*Rowena Bastin Bennett*



## 12 October

From where I stand now  
 the world is flat,  
 flat out flat,  
 no end to that.

Where my eyes go the land moves out

How is it then  
 five hundred years ago (about)  
 Columbus found  
 that far beyond the flat on flat  
 the world was round?

*Myra Cohn Livingston*





## Thanksgiving Day

Over the river and through the wood,  
To grandfather's house we go;  
The horse knows the way  
To carry the sleigh  
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood—  
Oh, how the wind does blow!  
It stings the toes  
And bites the nose,  
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,  
To have a first-rate play.  
Hear the bells ring,  
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"  
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river and through the wood,  
Trot fast, my dapple-gray!  
Spring over the ground,  
Like a hunting-hound!  
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river and through the wood,  
And straight through the barn-yard gate.  
We seem to go  
Extremely slow—  
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood—  
Now grandmother's cap I spy!  
Hurrah for the fun!  
Is the pudding done?  
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!

*L. Maria Child*

## Thanksgiving

Thank You  
for all my hands can hold—  
apples red,  
and melons gold,  
yellow corn  
both ripe and sweet,  
peas and beans  
so good to eat!

Thank You  
for all my eyes can see—  
lovely sunlight,  
field and tree,  
white cloud-boats  
in sea-deep sky,  
soaring bird  
and butterfly.

Thank You  
for all my ears can hear—  
birds' song echoing  
far and near,  
songs of little  
stream, big sea,  
cricket, bullfrog,  
duck and bee!

*Ivy O. Eastwick*



## Light the Festive Candles

(FOR HANUKKAH)

Light the first of eight tonight—  
the farthest candle to the right.

Light the first and second, too,  
when tomorrow's day is through.

Then light three, and then light four—  
every dusk one candle more

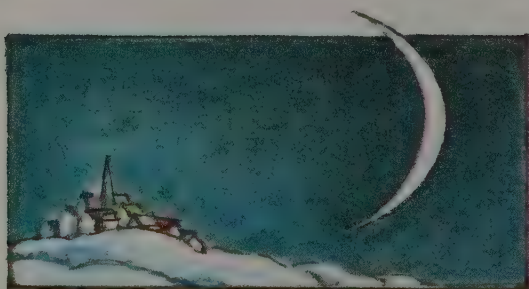
Till all eight burn bright and high,  
honoring a day gone by

When the Temple was restored,  
rescued from the Syrian lord,

And an eight-day feast proclaimed—  
The Festival of Lights—well named

To celebrate the joyous day  
when we regained the right to pray  
to our one God in our own way.

*Aileen Fisher*



## Winter Moon

How thin and sharp is the moon tonight!  
How thin and sharp and ghostly white  
Is the slim curved crook of the moon tonight!

*Langston Hughes*

## The Children's Carol

Here we come again, again, and here we come again!  
Christmas is a single pearl swinging on a chain,  
Christmas is a single flower in a barren wood, '  
Christmas is a single sail on the salty flood,  
Christmas is a single star in the empty sky,  
Christmas is a single song sung for charity.  
Here we come again, again, to sing to you again,  
Give a single penny that we may not sing in vain.

*Eleanor Farjeon*







## From: A Christmas Package

VIII

My stocking's where  
He'll see it—there!  
One-half a pair.

The tree is sprayed,  
My prayers are prayed,  
My wants are weighed.

I've made a list  
Of what he missed  
Last year. I've kissed

My father, mother,  
Sister, brother;  
I've done those other

Things I should  
And would and could.  
So far, so good.

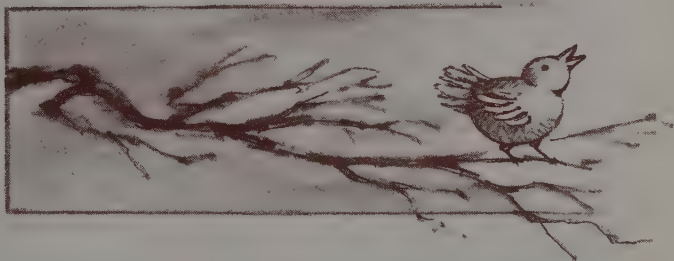
*David McCord*

## I Heard a Bird Sing

I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December  
A magical thing  
And sweet to remember.

"We are nearer to Spring  
Than we were in September,"  
I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December.

*Oliver Herford*

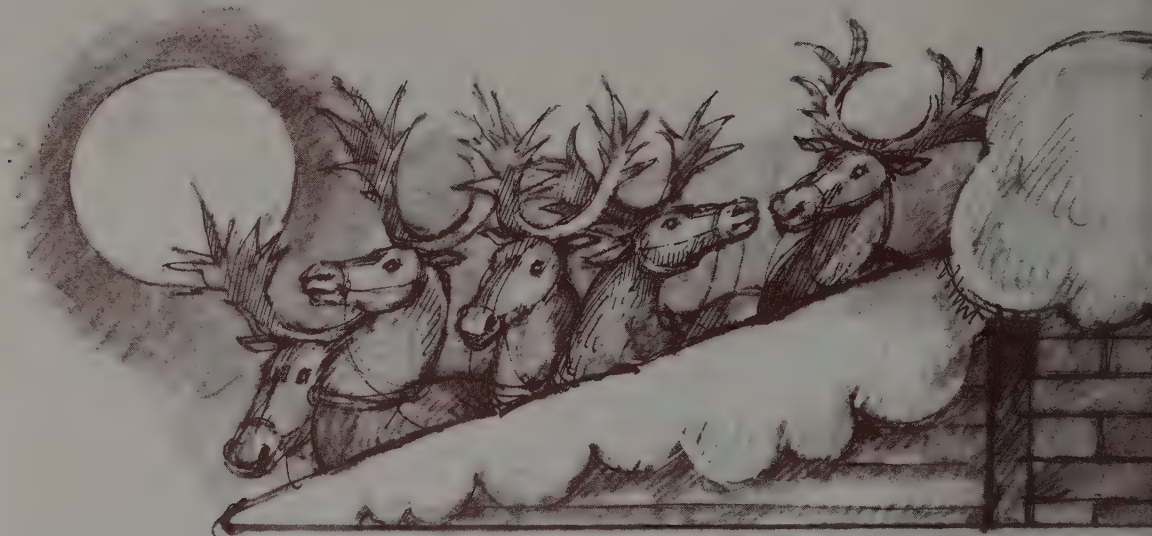


## Merry Christmas

I saw on the snow  
when I tried my skis  
the track of a mouse  
beside some trees.

Before he tunneled  
to reach his house  
he wrote "Merry Christmas"  
in white, in mouse.

*Aileen Fisher*



### A Visit from St. Nicholas



'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
 Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
 The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
 The children were nestled all snug in their beds;  
 While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
 And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
 Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—  
 When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.  
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
 Tore open the shutters, and threw up the sash.  
 The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
 Gave the luster of midday to objects below;  
 When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
 but a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,  
 With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
 I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
 More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
 And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:  
 "Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now, *Prancer* and *Vixen!*  
 On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!* on, *Donder* and *Blitzen!*  
 To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
 Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"  
 As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
 When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
 So up to the house-top the coursers they flew  
 With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.






And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
 The prancing and pawing of each little hoof—  
 As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
 Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
 He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
 And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
 A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
 And he looked like a pedlar just opening his pack.  
 His eyes—how they twinkled; his dimples, how merry!  
 His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
 And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;  
 The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
 And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;  
 He had a broad face and a little round belly  
 That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.  
 He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
 And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
 He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
 And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
 And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
 But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
 “Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”

Clement Clarke Moore





# DOGS AND CATS AND BEARS AND BATS

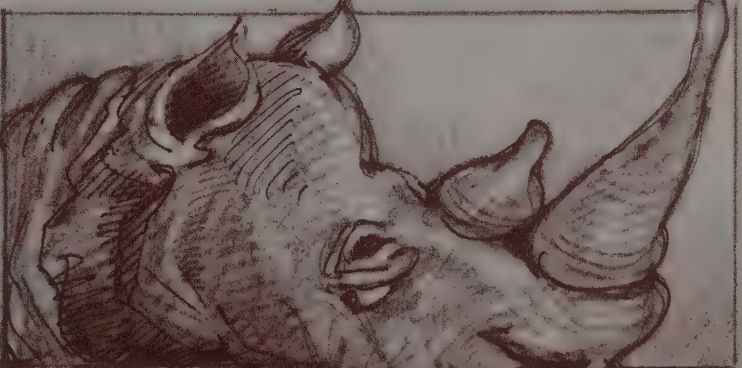
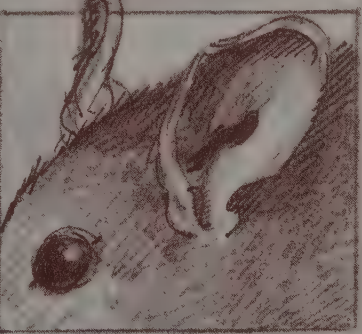
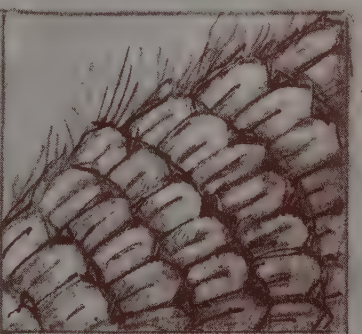
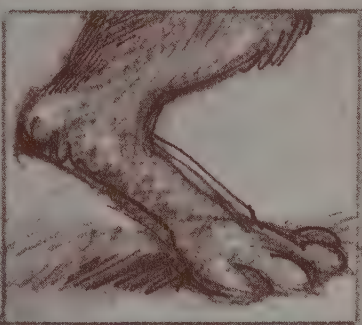
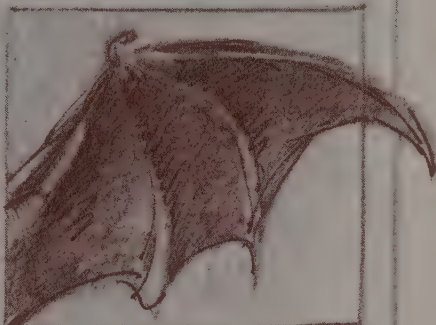
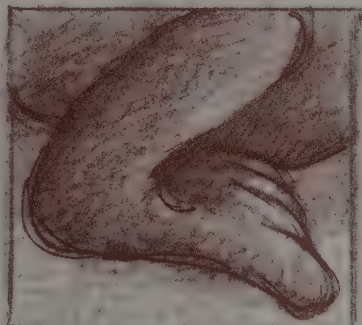
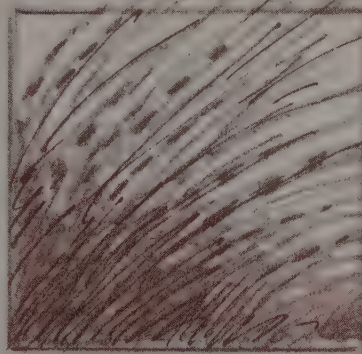
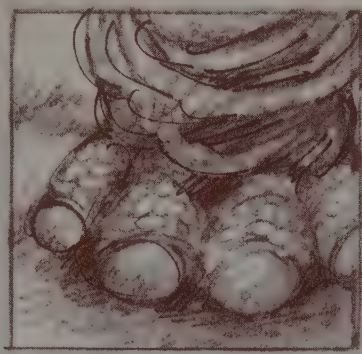
*Mammals are a varied lot;  
some are furry, some are not;  
many come equipped with tails;  
some have quills, a few have scales.*

*Some are large, and others small;  
some are quick, while others crawl;  
they prance on land, they swing from trees;  
they're underground and in the seas.*

*Some have hooves, and some have paws;  
some have fangs in snapping jaws;  
some will snarl if you come near;  
others quickly disappear.*

*Dogs and cats and bears and bats,  
all are mammals, so are rats;  
whales are mammals, camels too;  
I'm a mammal . . . so are YOU!*









## Mice

I think mice  
Are rather nice.

Their tails are long,  
Their faces small,  
They haven't any  
Chins at all.  
Their ears are pink,  
Their teeth are white,  
They run about  
The house at night.  
They nibble things  
They shouldn't touch  
And no one seems  
To like them much.

But *I* think mice  
Are nice.

*Rose Fyleman*

## The Waltzer in the House

A sweet, a delicate white mouse,  
A little blossom of a beast,  
Is waltzing in the house  
Among the crackers and the yeast.

O the swaying of his legs!  
O the bobbing of his head!  
The lady, beautiful and kind,  
The blue-eyed mistress, lately wed,  
Has almost laughed away her wits  
To see the pretty mouse that sits  
On his tiny pink behind  
And swaying, bobbing, begs.

She feeds him tarts and curds,  
Seed packaged for the birds,  
And figs, and nuts, and cheese;  
Polite as Pompadour to please  
The dainty waltzer of her house,  
The sweet, the delicate, the innocent white mouse.

As in a dream, as in a trance,  
She loves his rhythmic elegance,  
She laughs to see his bobbing dance.

*Stanley Kunitz*







## The Rabbit

When they said the time to hide was mine,  
I hid back under a thick grape vine.

And while I was still for the time to pass,  
A little gray thing came out of the grass.

He hopped his way through the melon bed  
And sat down close by a cabbage head.

He sat down close where I could see,  
And his big still eyes looked hard at me,

His big eyes bursting out of the rim,  
And I looked back very hard at him.

*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*

## The Chipmunk's Day

In and out the bushes, up the ivy,  
Into the hole  
By the old oak stump, the chipmunk flashes  
Up the pole.

To the feeder full of seeds he dashes,  
Stuffs his cheeks,  
The chickadee and titmouse scold him.  
Down he streaks.

Red as the leaves the wind blows off the maple,  
Red as a fox,  
Striped like a skunk, the chipmunk whistles  
Past the love seat, past the mailbox,

Down the path,  
Home to his warm hole stuffed with sweet  
Things to eat.  
Neat and slight and shining, his front feet

Curled at his breast, he sits there while the sun  
Stripes the red west  
With its last light: the chipmunk  
Dives to his rest.

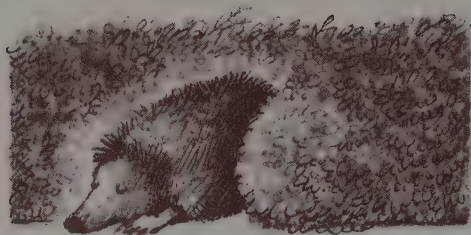
*Randall Jarrell*

## To a Squirrel at Kyle-Na-No

Come play with me;  
Why should you run  
Through the shaking tree  
As though I'd a gun  
To strike you dead?  
When all I would do  
Is to scratch your head  
And let you go.

*William Butler Yeats*





## The Hedgehog

The Hedgehog sleeps beneath the hedge—  
 As you may sometimes see—  
 And I prefer it sleeping there  
 To sleeping here with me!

*J. J. Bell*

## The Bat

By day the bat is cousin to the mouse.  
 He likes the attic of an ageing house.  
 His fingers make a hat about his head.  
 His pulse beat is so slow we think him dead.  
 He loops in crazy figures half the night  
 Among the trees that face the corner light.  
 But when he brushes up against a screen,  
 We are afraid of what our eyes have seen:  
 For something is amiss or out of place  
 When mice with wings can wear a human face.

*Theodore Roethke*



## The Bat

Bats are creepy; bats are scary;  
 Bats do not seem sanitary;  
 Bats in dismal caves keep cozy;  
 Bats remind us of Lugosi;  
 Bats have webby wings that fold up;  
 Bats from ceilings hang down rolled up;  
 Bats when flying undismayed are;  
 Bats are careful; bats use radar;  
 Bats at nighttime at their best are;  
 Bats by Batman unimpressed are!

*Frank Jacobs*



## The Sloth

In moving-slow he has no Peer.  
 You ask him something in his ear;  
 He thinks about it for a Year;  
 And, then, before he says a Word  
 There, upside down (unlike a Bird)  
 He will assume that you have Heard—  
 A most Ex-as-per-at-ing Lug.  
 But should you call his manner Smug,  
 He'll sigh and give his Branch a Hug;  
 Then off again to Sleep he goes,  
 Still swaying gently by his Toes,  
 And you just *know* he knows he knows.

*Theodore Roethke*





## Camel

I am a camel in all the sand.  
I do not require a helping hand.

Near where my camel-master sits  
Is a great big statue shattered into bits.

My hump is solid, my hoofs are tough;  
My personality is gruff.

I'm endlessly stubborn and stupidly slow.  
I invariably know the way to go.

*Alan Brownjohn*

## The Camel's Complaint

"Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,  
Parrots have crackers to crunch;  
And, as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles  
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.  
But there's never a question  
About MY digestion—  
ANYTHING does for me!

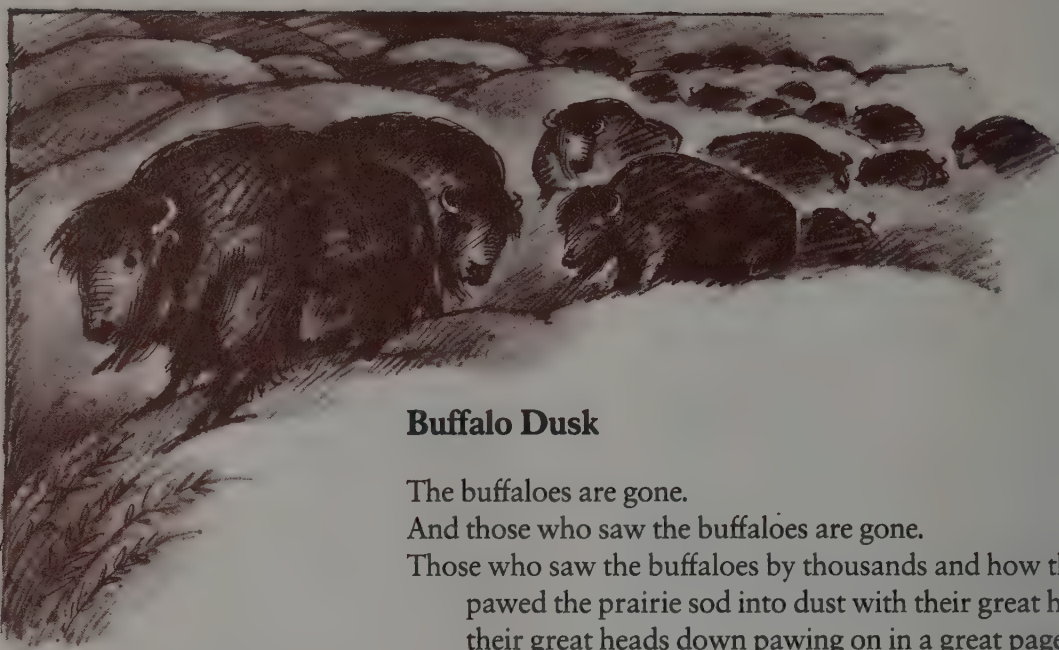
"Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,  
Chickens can roost upon rails;  
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,  
And oysters can slumber in pails.  
But no one supposes  
A poor Camel dozes—  
ANY PLACE does for me!

"Lambs are inclosed where it's never exposed,  
Coops are constructed for hens;  
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,  
And pigs are protected by pens.  
But a Camel comes handy  
Wherever it's sandy—  
ANYWHERE does for me!

"People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,  
Or mounted the back of an ox;  
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,  
Or try to bestraddle a fox.  
But as for a Camel, he's  
Ridden by families—  
ANY LOAD does for me!

"A snake is as round as a hole in the ground,  
And weasels are wavy and sleek;  
And no alligator could ever be straighter  
Than lizards that live in a creek.  
But a Camel's all lumpy  
And bumpy and humpy—  
ANY SHAPE does for me!"

*Charles Edward Carryl*



### Buffalo Dusk

The buffaloes are gone.  
 And those who saw the buffaloes are gone.  
 Those who saw the buffaloes by thousands and how they  
     pawed the prairie sod into dust with their great hoofs,  
     their great heads down pawing on in a great pageant  
     of dusk,  
 Those who saw the buffaloes are gone.  
 And the buffaloes are gone.

*Carl Sandburg*

### The Hippopotamus

The huge hippopotamus hasn't a hair  
 on the back of his wrinkly hide;  
 he carries the bulk of his prominent hulk  
 rather loosely assembled inside.

The huge hippopotamus lives without care  
 at a slow philosophical pace,  
 as he wades in the mud with a thump and a thud  
 and a permanent grin on his face.

*Jack Prelutsky*

### Holding Hands

Elephants walking  
 Along the trails

Are holding hands  
 By holding tails

Trunks and tails  
 Are handy things

When elephants walk  
 In circus rings.

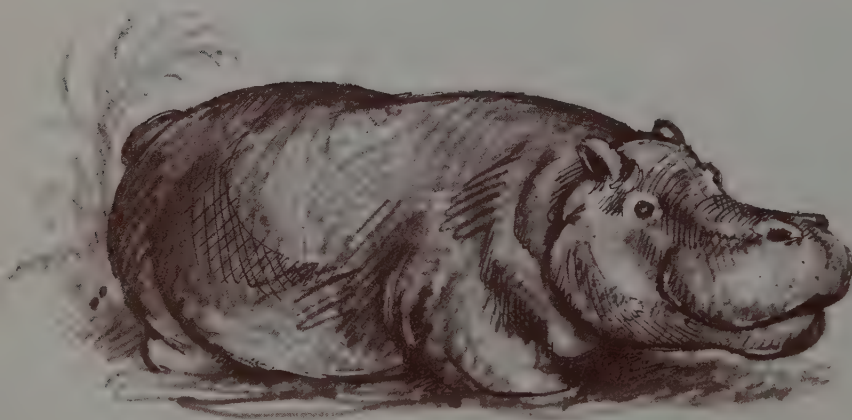
Elephants work  
 And elephants play

And elephants walk  
 And feel so gay.

And when they walk—  
 It never fails

They're holding hands  
 By holding tails.

*Lenore M. Link*

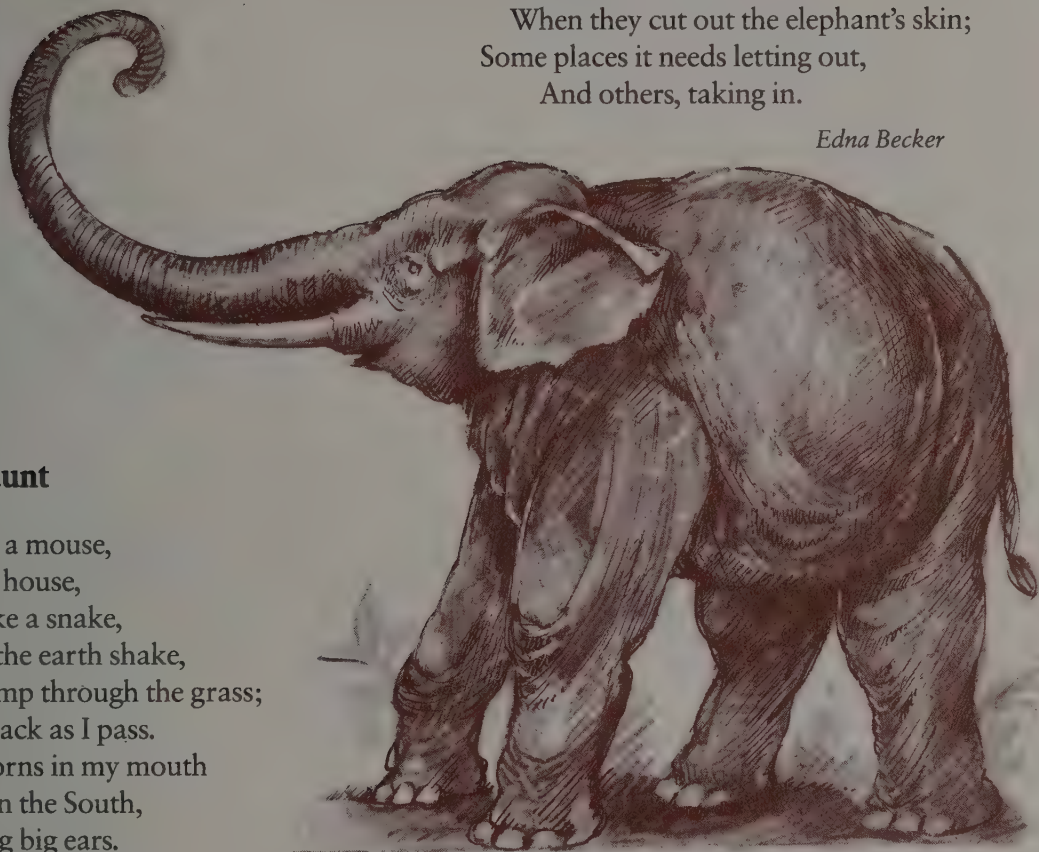




## Beside the Line of Elephants

I think they had no pattern  
 When they cut out the elephant's skin;  
 Some places it needs letting out,  
 And others, taking in.

*Edna Becker*



## Oliphaunt

Gray as a mouse,  
 Big as a house,  
 Nose like a snake,  
 I make the earth shake,  
 As I tramp through the grass;  
 Trees crack as I pass.  
 With horns in my mouth  
 I walk in the South,  
 Flapping big ears.  
 Beyond count of years  
 I stump round and round,  
 Never lie on the ground,  
 Not even to die.  
 Oliphaunt am I,  
 Biggest of all,  
 Huge, old, and tall.  
 If ever you'd met me,  
 You wouldn't forget me.  
 If you never do,  
 You won't think I'm true;  
 But old Oliphaunt am I,  
 And I never lie.

*J. R. R. Tolkien*

## The Wolf

When the pale moon hides and the wild wind wails,  
 And over the tree-tops the nighthawk sails,  
 The gray wolf sits on the world's far rim,  
 And howls: and it seems to comfort him.

The wolf is a lonely soul, you see,  
 No beast in the wood, nor bird in the tree,  
 But shuns his path; in the windy gloom  
 They give him plenty, and plenty of room.

So he sits with his long, lean face to the sky  
 Watching the ragged clouds go by.  
 There in the night, alone, apart,  
 Singing the song of his lone, wild heart.

Far away, on the world's dark rim  
 He howls, and it seems to comfort him.

*Georgia Roberts Durston*

## Four Little Foxes

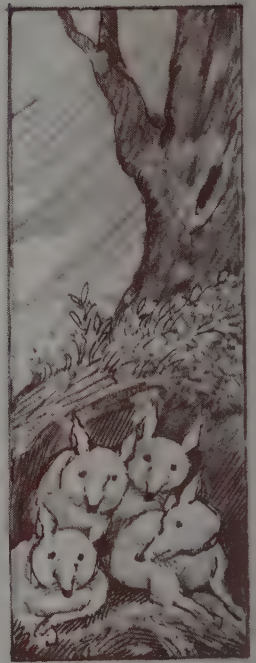
Speak gently, Spring, and make no sudden sound;  
For in my windy valley, yesterday, I found  
New-born foxes squirming on the ground—  
Speak gently.

Walk softly, March, forbear the bitter blow;  
Her feet within a trap, her blood upon the snow,  
The four little foxes saw their mother go—  
Walk softly.

Go lightly, Spring, oh, give them no alarm;  
When I covered them with boughs to shelter them from harm,  
The thin blue foxes suckled at my arm—  
Go lightly.

Step softly, March, with your rampant hurricane;  
Nuzzling one another, and whimpering with pain,  
The new little foxes are shivering in the rain—  
Step softly.

*Lew Sarett*



## Grandpa Bear's Lullaby

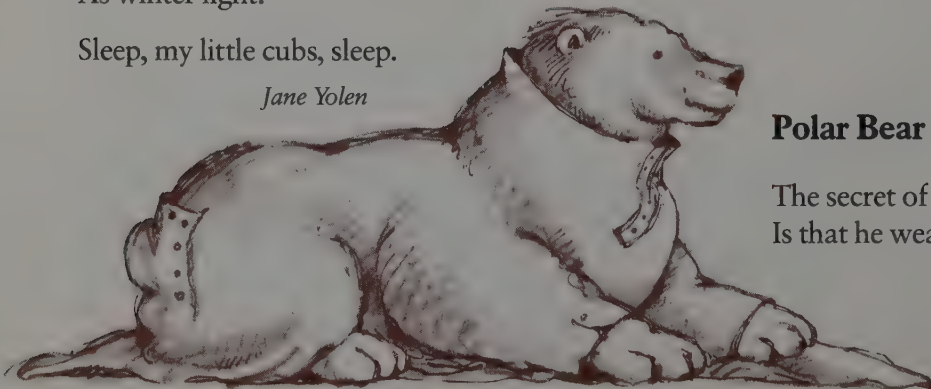
The night is long  
But fur is deep.  
You will be warm  
In winter sleep.

The food is gone  
But dreams are sweet  
And they will be  
Your winter meat.

The cave is dark  
But dreams are bright  
And they will serve  
As winter light.

Sleep, my little cubs, sleep.

*Jane Yolen*



## The Lesser Lynx

The laughter of the Lesser Lynx  
Is often insincere:  
It pays to be polite, he thinks,  
If Royalty is near.

So when the Lion steals his food  
Or kicks him from behind,  
He smiles, of course—but oh, the rude  
Remarks that cross his mind!

*E. V. Rieu*

## Polar Bear

The secret of the polar bear  
Is that he wears long underwear.

*Gail Kredenser*





## Leopard

Eons ago, when the earth was still yeasty,  
 The leopard, my love, was an unspotted beastly,  
 Unsullied as sunlight, not one spot or two spots.  
 Alas! He was snared for the simmering stew pots!  
 But too many cooks shaking shakers of spices  
 Created a much needed moment of crisis.  
 He leaped for his life while the cooks were kerchooing  
 And fled, all the fleet-footed natives pursuing.  
 He escaped! But his fur was still salted and peppered,  
 And that's how there came to be spots on the leopard.

*Gretchen Kreps*

## Lion

The lion, ruler over all the beasts,  
 Triumphant moves upon the grassy plain  
 With sun like gold upon his tawny brow  
 And dew like silver on his shaggy mane.

Into himself he draws the rolling thunder,  
 Beneath his flinty paw great boulders quake;  
 He will dispatch the mouse to burrow under,  
 The little deer to shiver in the brake.

He sets the fierce whip of each serpent lashing,  
 The tall giraffe brings humbly to his knees,  
 Awakes the sloth, and sends the wild boar crashing,  
 Wide-eyed monkeys chittering, through the trees.

He gazes down into the quiet river,  
 Parting the green bulrushes to behold  
 A sunflower-crown of amethyst and silver,  
 A royal coat of brushed and beaten gold.

*William Jay Smith*

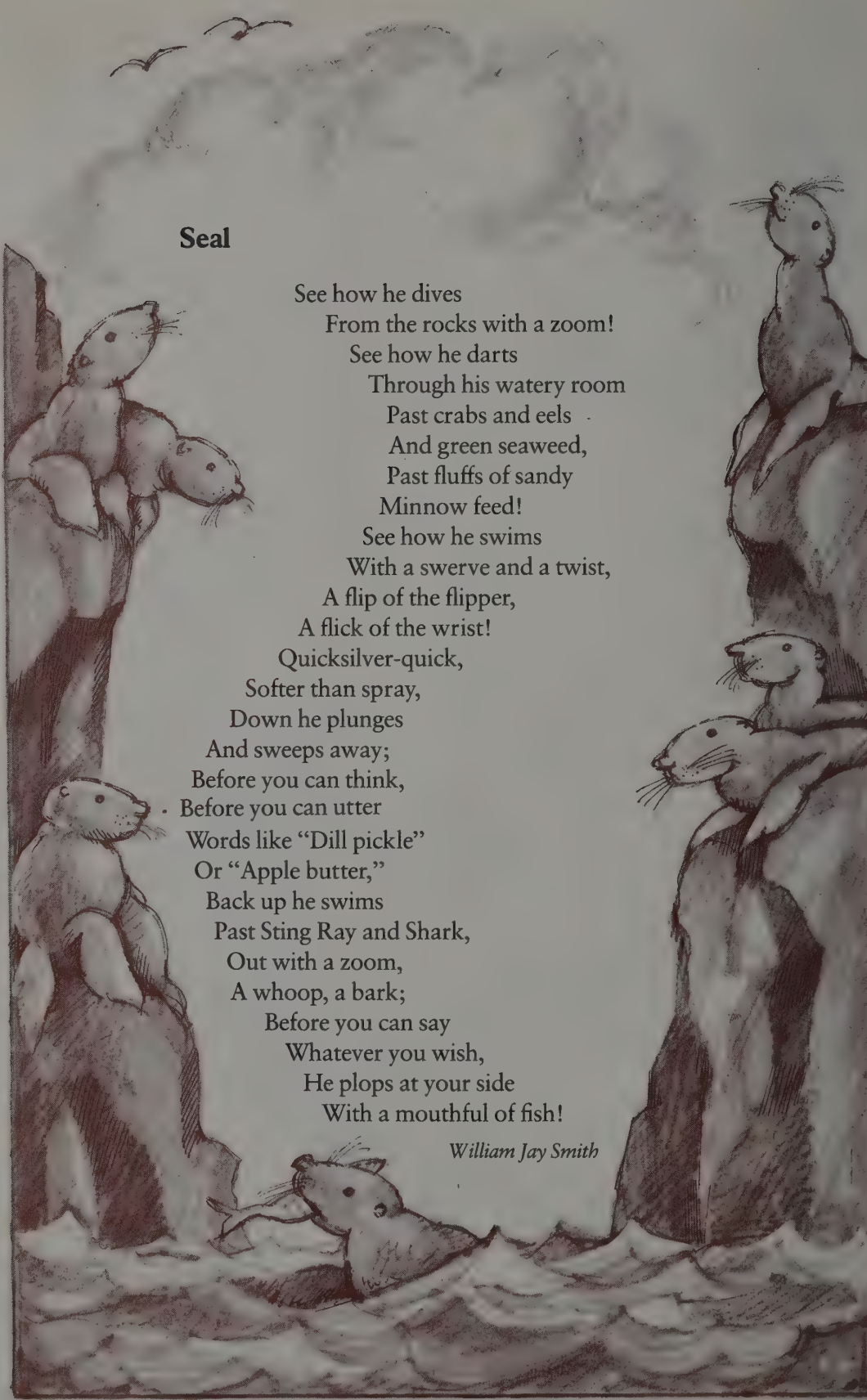


## The Lion

The lion has a golden mane  
 and under it a clever brain.  
 He lies around and idly roars  
 and lets the lioness do the chores.

*Jack Prelutsky*

## Seal



See how he dives  
From the rocks with a zoom!  
See how he darts  
Through his watery room  
Past crabs and eels  
And green seaweed,  
Past fluffs of sandy  
Minnow feed!  
See how he swims  
With a swerve and a twist,  
A flip of the flipper,  
A flick of the wrist!  
Quicksilver-quick,  
Softer than spray,  
Down he plunges  
And sweeps away;  
Before you can think,  
Before you can utter  
Words like "Dill pickle"  
Or "Apple butter,"  
Back up he swims  
Past Sting Ray and Shark,  
Out with a zoom,  
A whoop, a bark;  
Before you can say  
Whatever you wish,  
He plops at your side  
With a mouthful of fish!

*William Jay Smith*



## The Mandrill

In the Mandrill  
unrefined  
Beauty and Beast  
are well combined.  
How would *you* like  
to have that face  
to look at in your looking-glass?  
And all the other  
jungle creatures  
what must *they* think  
of those strange features?  
And that odd name  
the Mandrill—can  
it be he hopes  
to BE a *man*?  
But *that* face  
won't  
wash  
off  
with  
soap:  
I fear poor Mandrill  
has  
no  
hope.

Conrad Aiken



## The Performing Seal

Who is so proud  
As not to feel  
A secret awe  
Before a seal  
That keeps such sleek  
And wet repose  
While twirling candles  
On his nose?

Rachel Field

## The Wild, the Free

With flowing tail, and flying mane,  
Wide nostrils never stretched by pain,  
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,  
And feet that iron never shod,  
And flanks unscarred by spur or rod,  
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,  
Like waves that follow o'er the sea.

Lord Byron

## The Donkey

I saw a donkey  
One day old,  
His head was too big  
For his neck to hold;  
His legs were shaky  
And long and loose,  
They rocked and staggered  
And weren't much use.  
He tried to gambol  
And frisk a bit,  
But he wasn't quite sure  
Of the trick of it.  
His queer little coat  
Was soft and gray  
And curled at his neck  
In a lovely way.  
His face was wistful  
And left no doubt  
That he felt life needed  
Some thinking about.  
So he blundered round  
In venturesome quest,  
And then lay flat  
On the ground to rest.  
He looked so little  
And weak and slim,  
I prayed the world  
Might be good to him.

Anonymous



## Ode to the Pig: His Tail

My tail is not impressive  
 But it's elegant and neat.  
 In length it's not excessive—  
 I can't curl it round my feet—  
 But it's awfully expressive  
 And its weight is not excessive,  
 And I *don't* think it's conceit,  
 Or foolishly possessive  
 If I state with some aggressive-  
 ness that it's the final master touch  
 That makes a pig complete.

*Walter R. Brooks*



## The Pig

The pig is not a nervous beast;  
 He never worries in the least.  
 He lives his tranquil life unshaken,  
 And when he dies brings home the bacon.

*Roland Young*

## The Hairy Dog

My dog's so furry I've not seen  
 His face for years and years:  
 His eyes are buried out of sight,  
 I only guess his ears.

When people ask me for his breed,  
 I do not know or care:  
 He has the beauty of them all  
 Hidden beneath his hair.

*Herbert Asquith*



## A Pig Is Never Blamed

A pig is never blamed in case  
 he forgets to wash his face.  
 No dirty suds are on his soap,  
 because with soap he does not cope.  
 He never has to clean the tub  
 after he has had a scrub,  
 for whatever mess he makes,  
 a bath is what he never takes.  
 But then, what is a pool to him?  
 Poor pig, he never learns to swim.  
 And all the goodies he can cram  
 down his gullet turn to ham.  
 It's mean:  
 keeping clean.  
 You hardly want to, till you're very big.  
 But it's worse to be a pig.

*Babette Deutsch*

## The Cow

The cow is of the bovine ilk;  
 One end is moo, the other, milk.

*Ogden Nash*



## Roger the Dog

Asleep he wheezes at his ease.  
He only wakes to scratch his fleas.

He hogs the fire, he bakes his head  
As if it were a loaf of bread.

He's just a sack of snoring dog.  
You can lug him like a log.

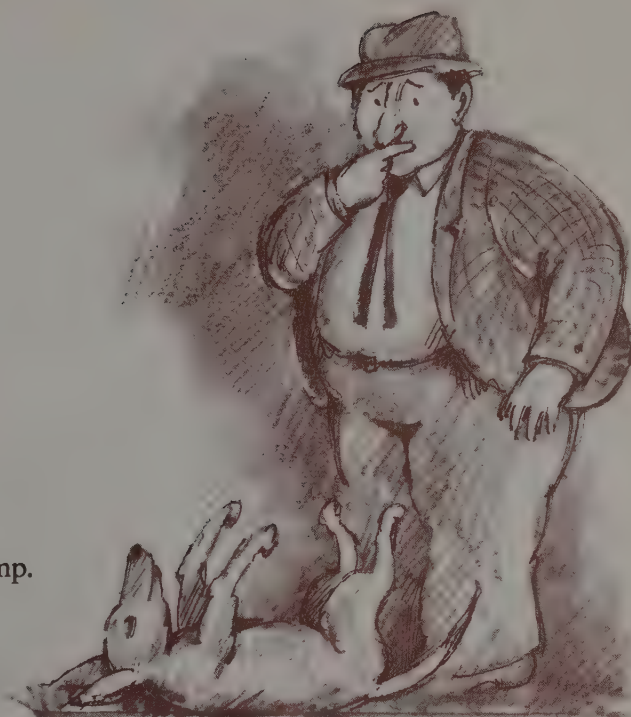
You can roll him with your foot,  
He'll stay snoring where he's put.

I take him out for exercise,  
He rolls in cowclap up to his eyes.

He will not race, he will not romp,  
He saves his strength for gobble and chomp.

He'll work as hard as you could wish  
Emptying his dinner dish,

Then flops flat, and digs down deep,  
Like a miner, into sleep.



*Ted Hughes*

## Lone Dog

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog and lone,  
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own!  
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;  
I love to sit and bay at the moon and keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,  
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat.  
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,  
But shut door and sharp stone and cuff and kick and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,  
Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide.  
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,  
Wide wind and wild stars and the hunger of the quest.

*Irene McLeod*





I've Got a Dog

I've got a dog as thin as a rail,  
He's got fleas all over his tail;  
Every time his tail goes flop,  
The fleas on the bottom all hop to the top.

Anonymous

Bliss

Let me fetch sticks,  
Let me fetch stones,  
Throw me your bones,  
Teach me your tricks.

When you go ride,  
Let me go run,  
You in the sun,  
Me at your side;

When you go swim,  
Let me go too  
Both lost in blue  
Up to the brim;

Let me do this,  
Let me do that—  
What you are at,  
That is my bliss.

Eleanor Farjeon



His Highness's Dog

I am his Highness's dog at Kew;  
Pray, tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

Anonymous

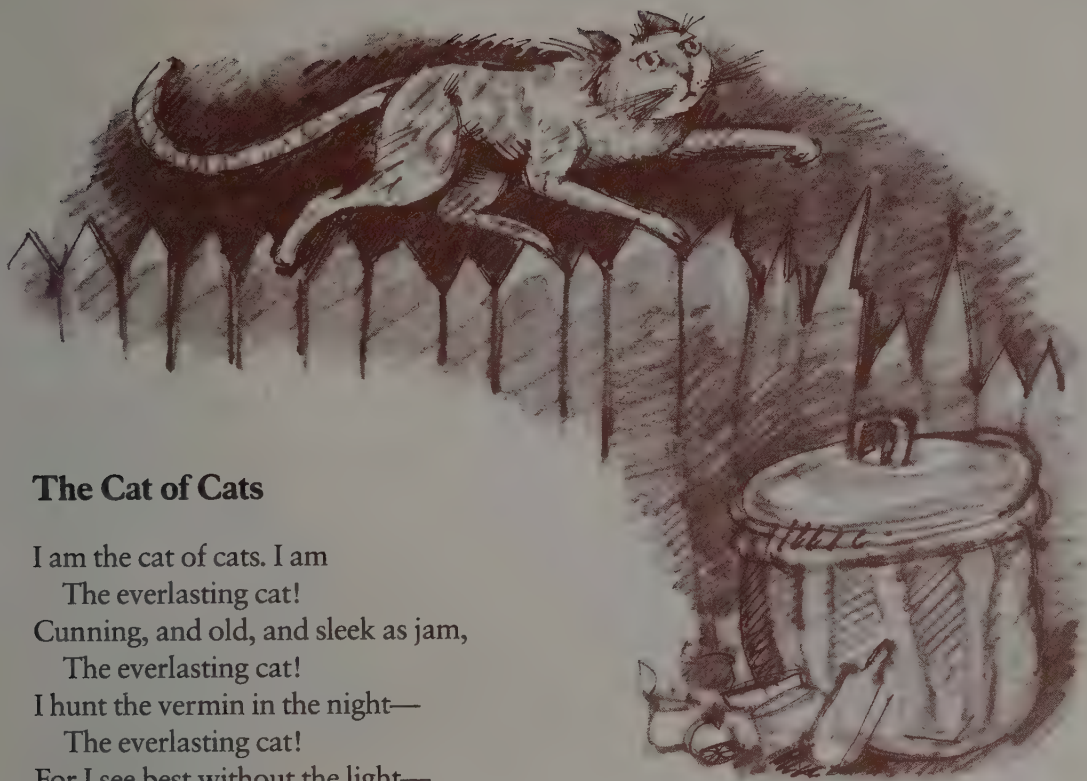


Sunning

Old Dog lay in the summer sun  
Much too lazy to rise and run.  
He flapped an ear  
At a buzzing fly.  
He winked a half opened  
Sleepy eye.  
He scratched himself  
On an itching spot,  
As he dozed on the porch  
Where the sun was hot.  
He whimpered a bit  
From force of habit  
While he lazily dreamed  
Of chasing a rabbit.  
But Old Dog happily lay in the sun  
Much too lazy to rise and run.

James S. Tippet

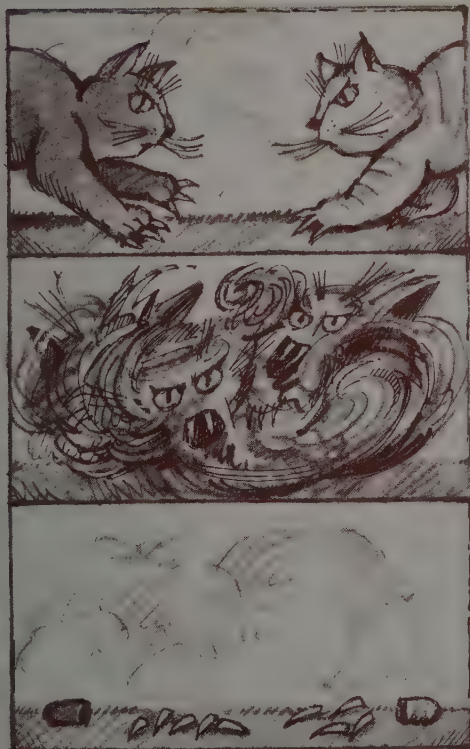




## The Cat of Cats

I am the cat of cats. I am  
 The everlasting cat!  
 Cunning, and old, and sleek as jam,  
 The everlasting cat!  
 I hunt the vermin in the night—  
 The everlasting cat!  
 For I see best without the light—  
 The everlasting cat!

*William Brighty Rands*



## The Cats of Kilkenny

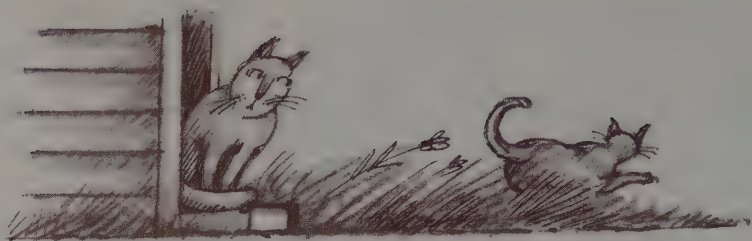
There were once two cats of Kilkenny,  
 Each thought there was one cat too many;  
 So they fought and they fit,  
 And they scratched and they bit,  
 Till, excepting their nails  
 And the tips of their tails,  
 Instead of two cats, there weren't any.

*Anonymous*

## A Cat in Despondency

A cat in despondency sighed  
 And resolved to commit suicide.  
 She passed under the wheels  
 Of eight automobiles,  
 And under the ninth one she died.

*Anonymous*



## Country Barnyard

Cats and kittens, kittens and cats  
under the barn and under the shed;  
a face by the steps, a tail by the ramp  
and off they go, if they hear a tread!

Sleep in the sun with one eye on guard,  
doze in the grass with a listening ear,  
run for the darkness under the barn  
as soon as a human being draws near!

Not quite wild and not quite tame,  
thin and limber, with hungry eye:  
the house cat sits at the kitchen door  
disdainfully watching her kin go by.

*Elizabeth Coatsworth*

## Cats



Cats sleep  
Anywhere,  
Any table,  
Any chair,  
Top of piano,  
Window-ledge,  
In the middle,  
On the edge,  
Open drawer,  
Empty shoe,  
Anybody's  
Lap will do,  
Fitted in a  
Cardboard box,  
In the cupboard  
With your frocks—  
Anywhere!  
They don't care!  
Cats sleep  
Anywhere.

*Eleanor Farjeon*

## Cat

The black cat yawns,  
Opens her jaws,  
Stretches her legs,  
And shows her claws.

Then she gets up  
And stands on four  
Long stiff legs  
And yawns some more.

She shows her sharp teeth,  
She stretches her lip,  
Her slice of a tongue  
Turns up at the tip.

Lifting herself  
On her delicate toes,  
She arches her back  
As high as it goes.

She lets herself down  
With particular care,  
And pads away  
With her tail in the air.

*Mary Britton Miller*





## Little Things

Little things, that run, and quail,  
And die, in silence and despair!

Little things, that fight, and fail,  
And fall, on sea, and earth, and air!

All trapped and frightened little things,  
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer!

As we forgive those done to us,  
—The lamb, the linnet, and the hare—

Forgive us all our trespasses,  
Little creatures, everywhere!

*James Stephens*



## Cat's Menu

I eat what I wish—  
It's a matter of taste.  
Whether liver or fish,  
I eat what I wish.  
Putting scraps in my dish  
Is a terrible waste.  
I eat what I wish—  
It's a matter of taste.

*Richard Shaw*



## Feather or Fur

When you watch for  
Feather or fur  
Feather or fur  
Do not stir  
Do not stir.

Feather or fur  
Come crawling  
Creeping  
Some come peeping  
Some by night  
And some by day.  
Most come gently  
All come softly  
Do not scare  
A friend away.

When you watch for  
Feather or fur  
Feather or fur  
Do not stir  
Do not stir.

*John Becker*





# THE WAYS OF LIVING THINGS

*There is wonder past all wonder  
in the ways of living things,  
in a worm's intrepid wriggling,  
in the song a blackbird sings,*

*In the grandeur of an eagle  
and the fury of a shark,  
in the calmness of a tortoise  
on a meadow in the dark,*

*In the splendor of a sea gull  
as it plummets from the sky,  
in the incandescent shimmer  
of a noisy dragonfly,*

*In a heron, still and silent  
underneath a crescent moon,  
in a butterfly emerging  
from its silver-spun cocoon.*

*In a fish's joyful splashing,  
in a snake that makes no sound,  
in the smallest salamander  
there is wonder to be found.*

## Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing;  
 Ladybird, nor butterfly,  
 Nor moth with dusty wing,  
 Nor cricket chirping cheerily,  
 Nor grasshopper so light of leap,  
 Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,  
 Nor harmless worms that creep.

*Christina Rossetti*



## Green Stems

Little things that crawl and creep  
 In the green grass forests,  
 Deep in their long-stemmed world  
 Where ferns uncurl  
 To a greener world  
 Beneath the leaves above them;  
 And every flower upon its stem  
 Blows above them there  
 The bottom of a geranium,  
 The back side of a trillium,  
 The belly of a bumblebee  
 Is all they see, these little things  
 Down so low  
 Where no bird sings  
 Where no winds blow,  
 Deep in their long-stemmed world.

*Margaret Wise Brown*

## Hey, Bug!

Hey, bug, stay!  
 Don't run away.  
 I know a game that we can play.

I'll hold my fingers very still  
 and you can climb a finger-hill.

No, no.  
 Don't go.

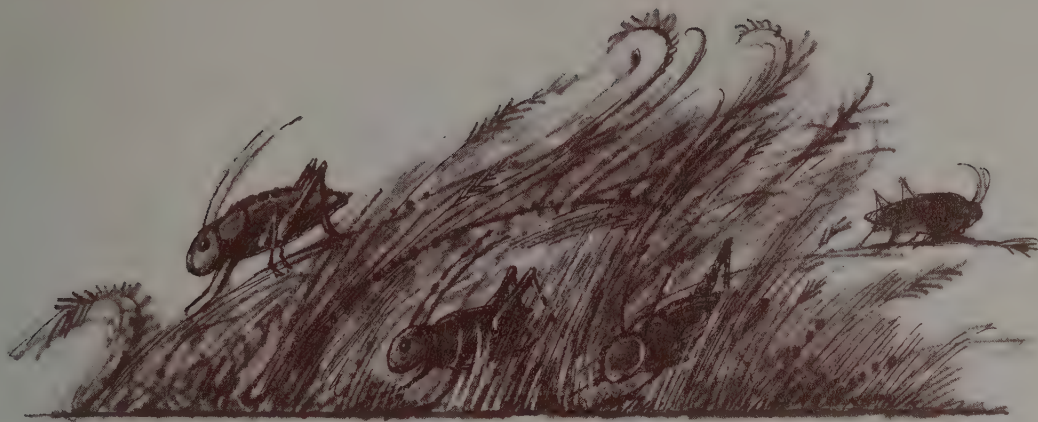
Here's a wall—a tower, too,  
 a tiny bug town, just for you.  
 I've a cookie. You have some.  
 Take this oatmeal cookie crumb.

Hey, bug, stay!  
 Hey, bug!  
 Hey!

*Lilian Moore*







## Praying Mantis

That praying mantis over there  
Is really not engaged in prayer.  
That praying mantis that you see  
Is really preying (with an "e").  
It preys upon the garter snake.  
It preys upon the bumblebee.  
It preys upon the cabbage worm,  
The wasp, the fly, the moth, the flea.  
(And sometimes, if its need is great,  
It even preys upon its mate.)

With prey and preying both so endless,  
It tends to end up rather friendless  
And seldom is commended much  
Except by gardeners and such.

*Mary Ann Hoberman*

## Crickets

Crickets  
Talk  
In the tall  
Grass  
All  
Late summer  
Long.  
When  
Summer  
Is gone,  
The dry  
Grass  
Whispers  
Alone.

*Valerie Worth*

## A Bug Sat in a Silver Flower

A bug sat in a silver flower  
Thinking silver thoughts.  
A bigger bug out for a walk  
Climbed up that silver flower stalk  
And snapped the small bug down his jaws  
Without a pause  
Without a care  
For all the bug's small silver thoughts.  
It isn't right  
It isn't fair  
That big bug ate that little bug  
Because that little bug was there.

He also ate his underwear.

*Karla Kuskin*



**Ants, Although Admirable,  
Are Awfully Aggravating**

The busy ant works hard all day  
And never stops to rest or play.  
He carries things ten times his size,  
And never grumbles, whines or cries.  
And even climbing flower stalks,  
He always runs, he never walks.  
He loves his work, he never tires,  
And never puffs, pants or perspires.

Yet though I praise his boundless vim  
I am not really fond of him.

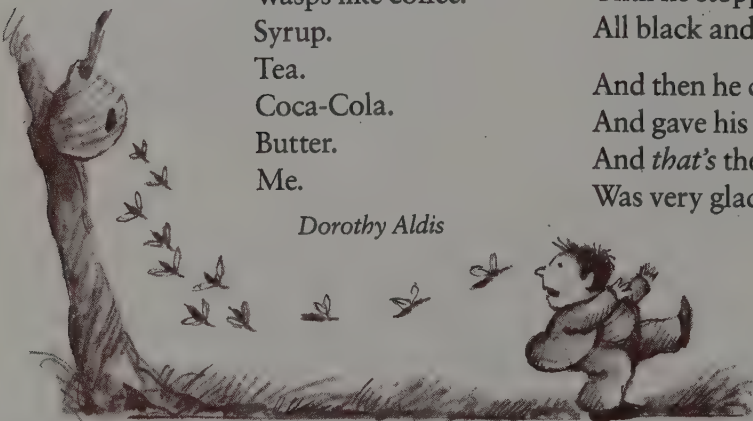
*Walter R. Brooks*



**Wasps**

Wasps like coffee.  
Syrup.  
Tea.  
Coca-Cola.  
Butter.  
Me.

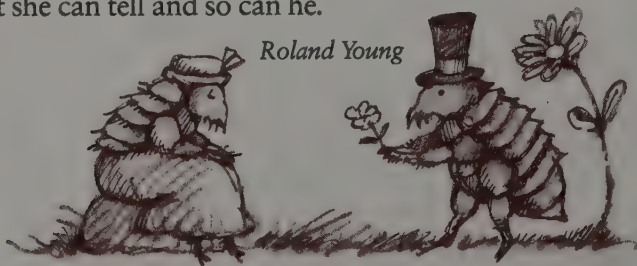
*Dorothy Aldis*



**The Flea**

And here's the happy, bounding flea—  
You cannot tell the he from she.  
The sexes look alike, you see;  
But she can tell and so can he.

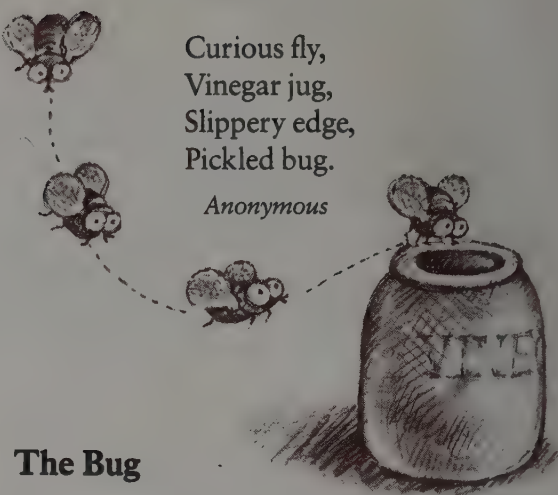
*Roland Young*



**Bug in a Jug**

Curious fly,  
Vinegar jug,  
Slippery edge,  
Pickled bug.

*Anonymous*



**The Bug**

And when the rain had gone away  
And it was shining everywhere,  
I ran out on the walk to play  
And found a little bug was there.

And he was running just as fast  
As any little bug could run,  
Until he stopped for breath at last,  
All black and shiny in the sun.

And then he chirped a song to me  
And gave his wings a little tug,  
And *that's* the way he showed that he  
Was very glad to be a bug!

*Marjorie Barrows*

**Oh the Toe-Test!**

The fly, the fly,  
in the wink of an eye,  
can taste with his feet  
if the syrup is sweet  
or the bacon is salty.  
Oh is it his fault he  
gets toast on his toes  
as he tastes as he goes?

*Norma Farber*





## Cockroaches

A leaf bug comes from an egg in June  
Before it can live and thrive.  
A green moth comes from a curled cocoon,  
A honeybee from a hive.  
But though in all of the insect books  
Such varied sources make sense,  
Like water beetles coming from brooks  
Or caterpillars from tents . . .  
The thing that really puzzles me some  
In the way of bug affairs  
Is: why do cockroaches always come  
From The People Living Upstairs?

*Kaye Starbird*

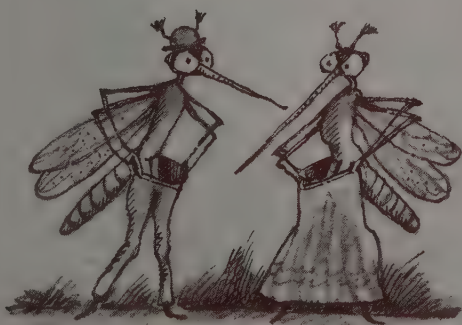
## When Mosquitoes Make a Meal

When mosquitoes make a meal,  
arms and legs have great appeal.

But they stay out when we go in.  
That's why mosquitoes are so thin.

And if we keep them from their dinner,  
they're bound to grow a great deal thinner.

*Else Holmelund Minarik*



## A Dragonfly

When the heat of the summer  
Made drowsy the land,  
A dragonfly came  
And sat on my hand.

With its blue-jointed body,  
And wings like spun glass,  
It lit on my fingers  
As though they were grass.

*Eleanor Farjeon*



### Fireflies in the Garden

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,  
And here on earth come emulating flies,  
That though they never equal stars in size,  
(And they were never really stars at heart)  
Achieve at times a very star-like start.  
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

*Robert Frost*

### Caterpillar

Brown and furry  
Caterpillar in a hurry,  
Take your walk  
To the shady leaf, or stalk,  
Or what not,  
Which may be the chosen spot.  
No toad spy you,  
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;  
Spin and die,  
To live again a butterfly.

*Christina Rossetti*

### The Tickle Rhyme

"Who's that tickling my back?" said the wall.  
"Me," said a small  
Caterpillar. "I'm learning  
To crawl."

*Ian Serraillier*



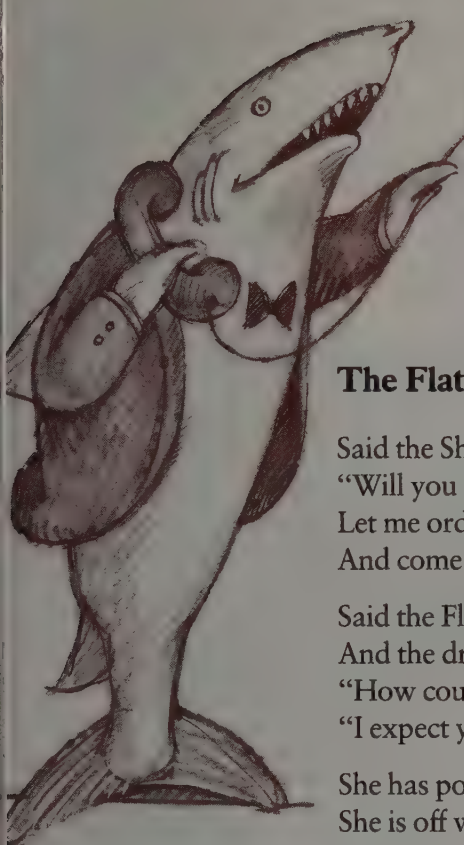
### Ladybug

A small speckled visitor  
wearing crimson cape,  
brighter than a cherry,  
smaller than a grape.  
  
A polka-dotted someone  
walking on my wall,  
a black-hooded lady  
in a scarlet shawl.

*Joan Walsh Anglund*







### The Flattered Flying Fish

Said the Shark to the Flying Fish over the phone:  
 "Will you join me tonight? I am dining alone.  
 Let me order a nice little dinner for two!  
 And come as you are, in your shimmering blue."

Said the Flying Fish: "Fancy remembering me,  
 And the dress that I wore at the Porpoises' tea!"  
 "How could I forget?" said the Shark in his guile:  
 "I expect you at eight!" and rang off with a smile.

She has powdered her nose; she has put on her things;  
 She is off with one flap of her luminous wings.  
 O little one, lovely, light-hearted and vain,  
 The Moon will not shine on your beauty again!



*E. V. Rieu*



### A Wee Little Worm

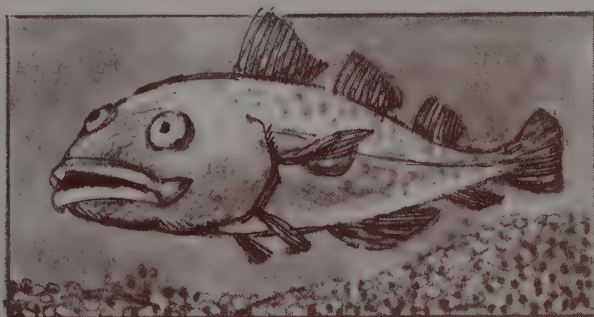
A wee little worm in a hickory-nut  
 Sang, happy as he could be,  
 "O I live in the heart of the whole round world,  
 And it all belongs to me!"

*James Whitcomb Riley*

### The Codfish

The codfish lays ten thousand eggs,  
 The homely hen lays one.  
 The codfish never cackles  
 To tell you what she's done.  
 And so we scorn the codfish,  
 While the humble hen we prize,  
 Which only goes to show you  
 That it pays to advertise.

*Anonymous*





## Long Gone

Don't waste your time in looking for  
the long-extinct tyrannosaur,  
because this ancient dinosaur  
just can't be found here anymore.

This also goes for stegosaurus,  
allosaurus, brontosaurus  
and any other saur or saurus.  
They all lived here long before us.

*Jack Prelutsky*

## The Shark

A treacherous monster is the Shark,  
He never makes the least remark.

And when he sees you on the sand,  
He doesn't seem to want to land.

He watches you take off your clothes,  
And not the least excitement shows.

His eyes do not grow bright or roll,  
He has astounding self-control.

He waits till you are quite undressed,  
And seems to take no interest.

And when towards the sea you leap,  
He looks as if he were asleep.

But when you once get in his range,  
His whole demeanor seems to change.

He throws his body right about,  
And his true character comes out.

It's no use crying or appealing,  
He seems to lose all decent feeling.

After this warning you will wish  
To keep clear of this treacherous fish.

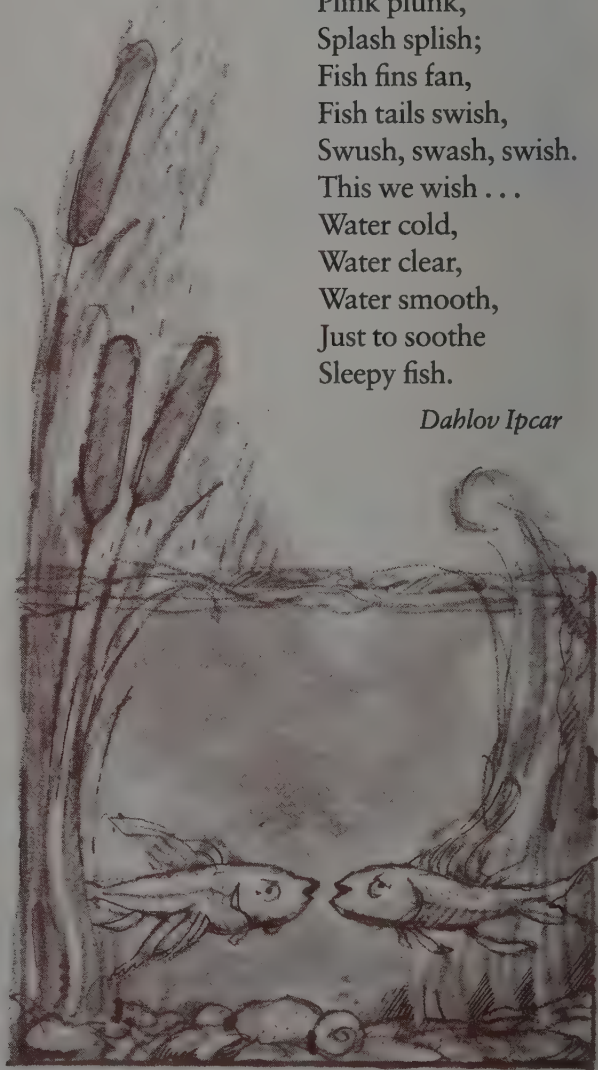
His back is black, his stomach white,  
He has a very dangerous bite.

*Lord Alfred Douglas*

## Fishes' Evening Song

Flip flop,  
Flip flap,  
Slip slap,  
Lip lap;  
Water sounds,  
Soothing sounds.  
We fan our fins  
As we lie  
Resting here  
Eye to eye.  
Water falls  
Drop by drop,  
Plip plop,  
Drip drop.  
Plink plunk,  
Splash splish;  
Fish fins fan,  
Fish tails swish,  
Swush, swash, swish.  
This we wish . . .  
Water cold,  
Water clear,  
Water smooth,  
Just to soothe  
Sleepy fish.

*Dahlov Ipcar*







## Brontosaurus

The giant brontosaurus  
Was a prehistoric chap  
With four fat feet to stand on  
And a very skimpy lap.  
The scientists assure us  
Of a most amazing thing—  
A brontosaurus blossomed  
When he had a chance to sing!

(The bigger brontosauruses,  
Who liked to sing in choruses,  
Would close their eyes  
and harmonize  
And sing most anything.)

They growled and they yowled,  
They deedled and they dummed;  
They warbled and they whistled,  
They howled and they hummed.  
They didn't eat, they didn't sleep;  
They sang and sang all day.  
Now all you'll find are footprints  
Where they tapped the time away!

*Gail Kredenser*

## Sally and Manda

Sally and Manda are two little lizards  
Who gobble up flies in their two little gizzards.  
They live by a toadstool near two little hummocks  
And crawl all around on their two little stomachs.

*Alice B. Campbell*



## The Boa

Allow me just one short remark  
About this lengthy Boa:  
If Noah had it in his ark,  
I sympathize with Noah!

*J. J. Bell*

## The Lizard

The Lizard is a timid thing  
That cannot dance or fly or sing;  
He hunts for bugs beneath the floor  
And longs to be a dinosaur.

*John Gardner*



## Desert Tortoise

I am the *old* one here.

Mice  
and snakes  
and deer  
and butterflies  
and badgers  
come and go.  
Centipedes  
and eagles  
come and go.

But tortoises  
grow old  
and *stay*.

Our lives stretch out.

I cross  
the same arroyo  
that I crossed  
when I was young,  
returning to  
the same safe den  
to sleep through  
winter's cold.  
Each spring,  
I warm myself  
in the same sun,  
search for the same  
long tender blades  
of green,  
and taste the same  
ripe juicy cactus fruit.

I know  
the slow  
sure way  
my world  
repeats itself.  
I know  
how I fit in.

My shell still shows  
the toothmarks  
where a wildcat  
thought he had me  
long ago.  
He didn't know  
that I was safe  
beneath  
the hard brown rock  
he tried to bite.

I trust that shell.  
I move  
at my own speed.

This  
is a good place  
for an old tortoise  
to walk.

*Byrd Baylor*





## The Crocodile

How doth the little crocodile  
Improve his shining tail,  
And pour the waters of the Nile  
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin!  
How neatly spread his claws,  
And welcomes little fishes in  
With gently smiling jaws!

*Lewis Carroll*



## The Frog

Be kind and tender to the Frog,  
And do not call him names,  
As "Slimy skin," or "Polly-wog,"  
Or likewise "Ugly James,"  
Or "Gape-a-grin," or "Toad-gone-wrong,"  
Or "Billy Bandy-knees":  
The Frog is justly sensitive  
To epithets like these.  
No animal will more repay  
A treatment kind and fair;  
At least so lonely people say  
Who keep a frog (and, by the way,  
They are extremely rare).

*Hilaire Belloc*

## Samuel

I found this salamander  
Near the pond in the wood.  
Samuel, I called him—  
Samuel, Samuel.  
Right away I loved him.  
He loved me too, I think.  
Samuel, I called him—  
Samuel, Samuel.

I took him home in a coffee can,  
And at night  
He slept in my bed.  
In the morning  
I took him to school.

He died very quietly during spelling.

Sometimes I think  
I should have left him  
Near the pond in the woods.  
Samuel, I called him—  
Samuel, Samuel.

*Bobbi Katz*

## The Tree Frog

The tree frog  
Creaks and croaks and croaks  
And says "Dee deep"  
On elms and oaks,  
"Dee deep," he says  
And stops, till when  
It's time to say  
"Dee deep" again.

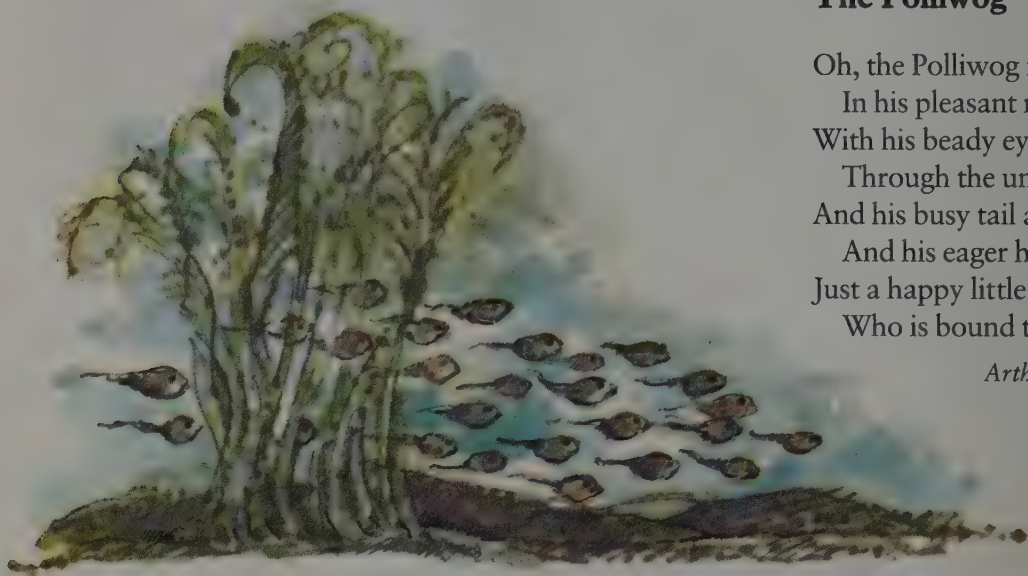
*John Travers Moore*



## The Polliwog

Oh, the Polliwog is woggling  
In his pleasant native bog  
With his beady eyes a-goggling  
Through the underwater fog  
And his busy tail a-joggling  
And his eager head agog—  
Just a happy little frogling  
Who is bound to be a Frog!

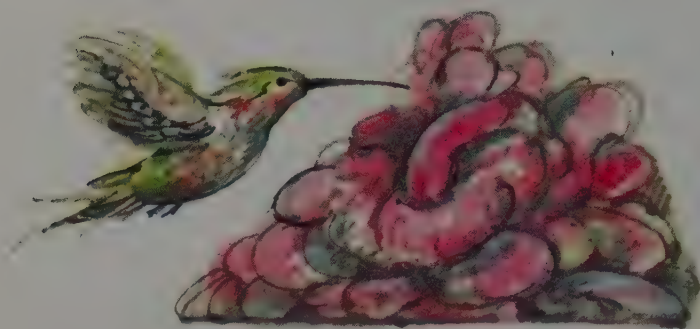
*Arthur Guiterman*



## The Hummingbird

The Hummingbird, he has no song  
From flower to flower he hums along  
Humming his way among the trees  
He finds no words for what he sees

*Michael Flanders*



## Baby Talk

The fledglings have a language  
That is all their own.  
They lisp in broken syllables  
In a high, clear tone.  
Each bird learns first a single word  
Quite long for a beginner,  
But says it very plainly,  
"Dinner  
Dinner  
Dinner."

*Anna Bird Stewart*

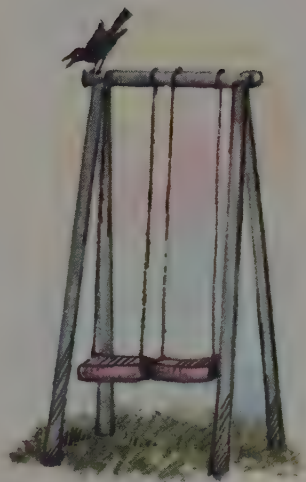




## The Canary

The song of canaries  
Never varies,  
And when they're moulting  
They're pretty revolting.

*Ogden Nash*



## The Blackbird

In the far corner  
close by the swings,  
every morning  
a blackbird sings.

His bill's so yellow,  
his coat's so black,  
that he makes a fellow  
whistle back.

Ann, my daughter,  
thinks that he  
sings for us two  
especially.

*Humbert Wolfe*

## Ducks' Ditty

All along the backwater,  
Through the rushes tall,  
Ducks are a-dabbling.  
Up tails all!

Ducks' tails, drakes' tails,  
Yellow feet a-quiver,  
Yellow bills all out of sight  
Busy in the river!

Slushy green undergrowth  
Where the roach swim—  
Here we keep our larder,  
Cool and full and dim.

Every one for what he likes!  
We like to be  
Head down, tails up,  
Dabbling free!

High in the blue above  
Swifts whirl and call—  
We are down a-dabbling  
Up tails all!

*Kenneth Grahame*

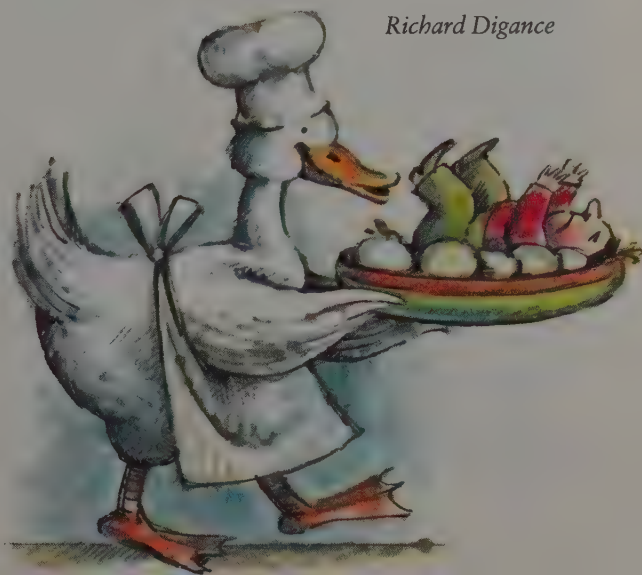
## The Duck

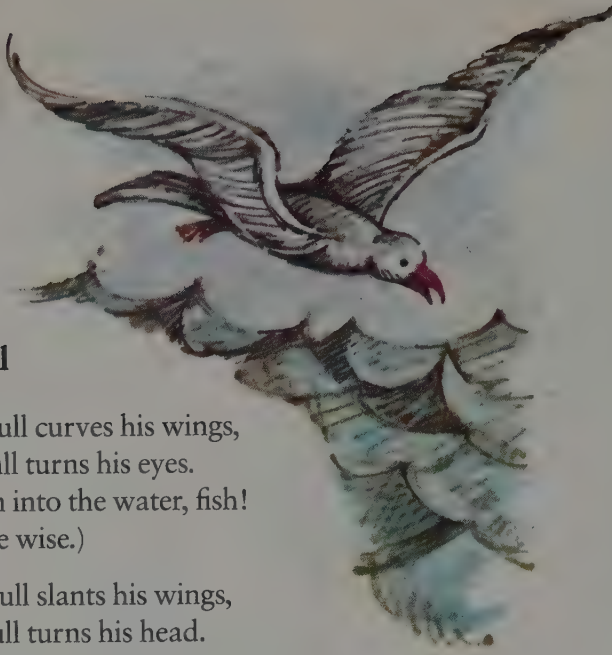
When you're a Duck like me it's impossible  
to make friends with humans like you.  
We're friendly and don't cause any trouble,  
but you're not and you certainly do.

We swim round, me and the family,  
while you throw us old lumps of bread.  
Your dog starts to run with the crack of your gun  
and one of us loses his head.

And if that's not enough, then you cook us  
with our legs sticking up in the air.  
Try putting yourself into our place.  
I tell you, it just isn't fair.

*Richard Digance*





## Sea Gull

The sea gull curves his wings,  
the sea gull turns his eyes.  
Get down into the water, fish!  
(if you are wise.)

The sea gull slants his wings,  
the sea gull turns his head.  
Get deep into the water, fish!  
(or you'll be dead.)

*Elizabeth Coatsworth*

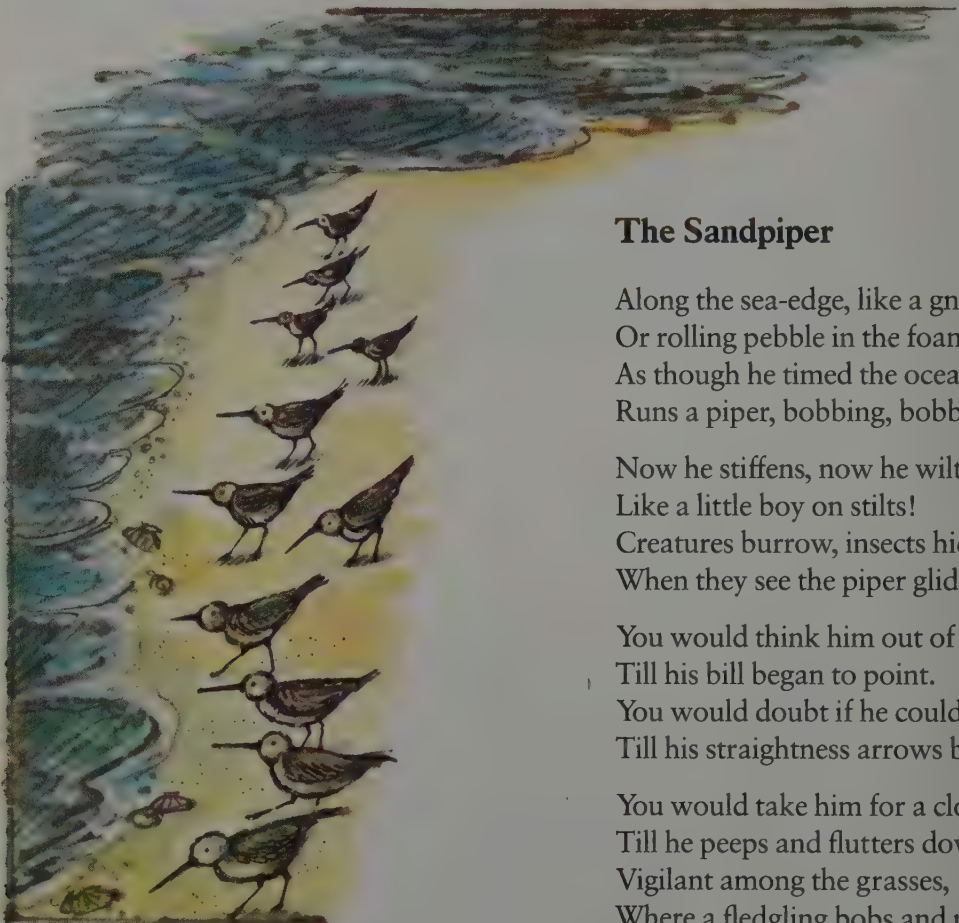
## The Sandpiper

At the edge of tide  
He stops to wonder,  
Races through  
The lace of thunder.

On toothpick legs  
Swift and brittle,  
He runs and pipes  
And his voice is little.

But small or not,  
He has a notion  
To outshout  
The Atlantic Ocean.

*Frances Frost*



## The Sandpiper

Along the sea-edge, like a gnome  
Or rolling pebble in the foam,  
As though he timed the ocean's throbbing,  
Runs a piper, bobbing, bobbing.

Now he stiffens, now he wilts,  
Like a little boy on stilts!  
Creatures burrow, insects hide,  
When they see the piper glide.

You would think him out of joint,  
Till his bill began to point.  
You would doubt if he could fly,  
Till his straightness arrows by.

You would take him for a clown,  
Till he peeps and flutters down,  
Vigilant among the grasses,  
Where a fledgling bobs and passes.

*Witter Bynner*





## The Hen

The Hen is a ferocious fowl,  
She pecks you till she makes you howl.

And all the time she flaps her wings,  
And says the most insulting things.

And when you try to take her eggs,  
She bites large pieces from your legs.

The only safe way to get these,  
Is to creep on your hands and knees.

In the meanwhile a friend must hide,  
And jump out on the other side.

And then you snatch the eggs and run,  
While she pursues the other one.

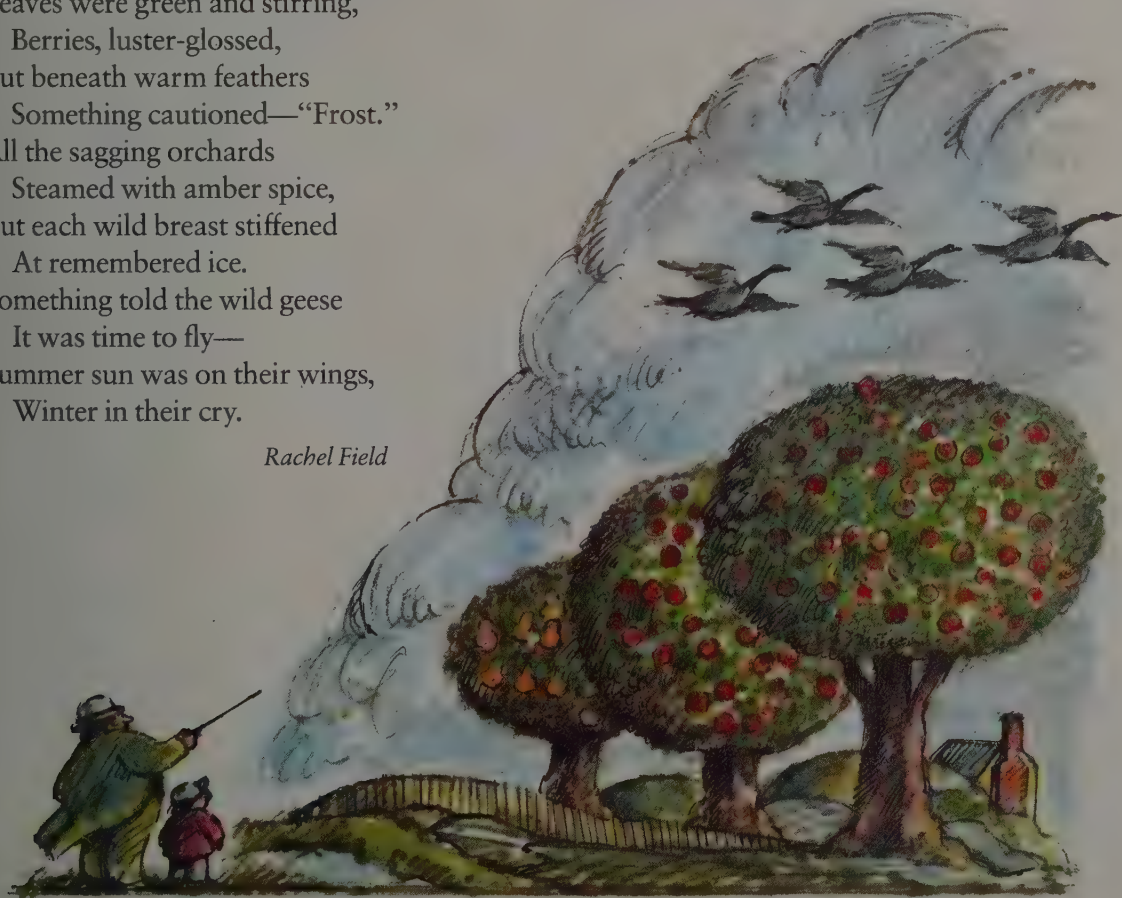
The difficulty is, to find  
A trusty friend who will not mind.

*Lord Alfred Douglas*

## Something Told the Wild Geese

Something told the wild geese  
It was time to go.  
Though the fields lay golden  
Something whispered—"Snow."  
Leaves were green and stirring,  
Berries, luster-glossed,  
But beneath warm feathers  
Something cautioned—"Frost."  
All the sagging orchards  
Steamed with amber spice,  
But each wild breast stiffened  
At remembered ice.  
Something told the wild geese  
It was time to fly—  
Summer sun was on their wings,  
Winter in their cry.

*Rachel Field*



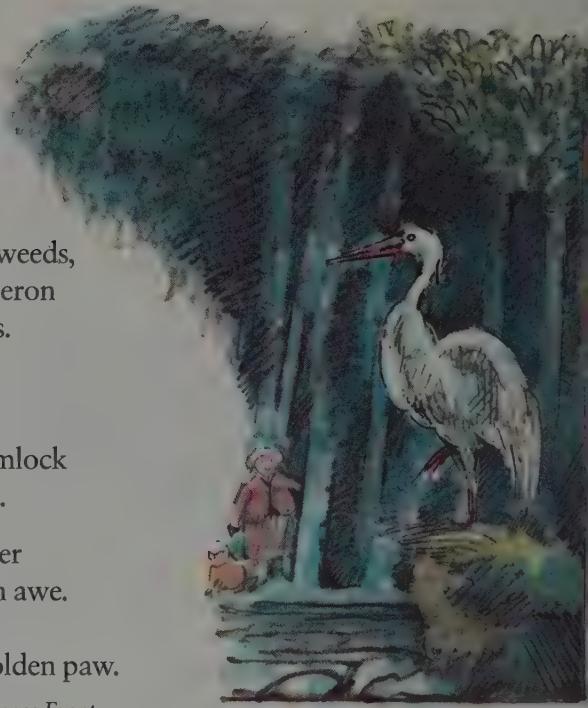
## Night Heron

Hunting my cat along the evening brook  
Where she'd been stalking deer mice in the weeds,  
I nearly missed this sight—the great night heron  
Bluer than dusk in the maze of willow reeds.

Beautiful, motionless, he stood in silence  
On one leg, waiting for lantern flies,  
And gazed across the brook to where in hemlock  
His nest of sticks rose high against the skies.

Then at my feet I saw my fierce young hunter  
Crouched in the wet grass, trembling and in awe.  
We left our heron to his stars. Cat shivered  
And touched my cheek with a damp and golden paw.

*Frances Frost*



## The Vulture

The Vulture eats between his meals  
And that's the reason why  
He very, very rarely feels  
As well as you and I.

His eye is dull, his head is bald,  
His neck is growing thinner.  
Oh! what a lesson for us all  
To only eat at dinner!

*Hilaire Belloc*







### The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

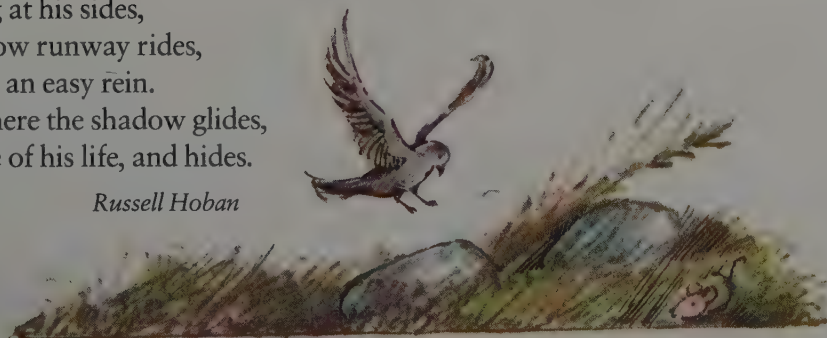
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

*Alfred Tennyson*

### The Sparrow Hawk

Wings like pistols flashing at his sides,  
Masked, above the meadow runway rides,  
Galloping, galloping with an easy rein.  
Below, the fieldmouse, where the shadow glides,  
Holds fast the small purse of his life, and hides.

*Russell Hoban*









# CITY, OH, CITY!

*City, oh, city  
of glory and grace,  
of breathtaking towers  
that soar into space,  
of bottomless canyons,  
steel, rivet, and stone;  
City, oh, city,  
how mighty you've grown.*

*City, oh, city  
of myriad ways,  
of thunderous sounds  
that resound through your days,  
of glistening lanterns  
that brighten your nights;  
City, oh, city  
of shining delights.*



## Just for One Day

Hey, sidewalk pacers  
bumper riders  
long-legged gliders  
stalkers, ledge walkers  
roof straddlers  
fence jumpers  
stompers, trouncers  
muggers, sluggers  
big burly bouncers  
alley runners  
stabbers, purse grabbers  
hurriers, harriers  
scared scurriers  
all chased and chasers,  
please cease for a moment  
oh please,  
lie down in a heap  
and sleep.

*Lillian Morrison*

## The Riveter

This worker is a fearless one,  
a daring acrobat,  
He creeps across the narrow beams,  
As steady as a cat.  
He shifts and swings the girders,  
While the wind about him blows.  
He drives the red-hot rivets,  
Though a fly sits on his nose.  
Imagine how it feels to work  
Up twenty stories high,  
Riveting the girders there  
That shine against the sky!

*Mabel Watts*



## Gift with the Wrappings Off

Oh, what can you do with a Christmas pup  
In a little apartment three flights up?  
He prowls.

And whenever the landlord happens by  
With a "Rent's due!" gleam in his fishy eye,  
He howls!

Or whenever you dress for a hurry date,  
With a frantic prayer that you won't be late,  
He "helps"!

Or when guests sit down in the rocking chair  
And neglect to see if a tail is there.  
He yelps;

And if you protest that he isn't hurt  
And call him out from beneath your skirt,  
He balks.

Or perhaps there's rain, or a two-foot snow,  
Or it's three *a.m.*—then he's got to go  
For walks!

And the place you pick for his bed at night  
Is the one sure place that he doesn't quite  
Approve.

Oh, what can you do with a Christmas pup  
In a little apartment three flights up?  
Move?

*Mary Elizabeth Counselman*



## City, City

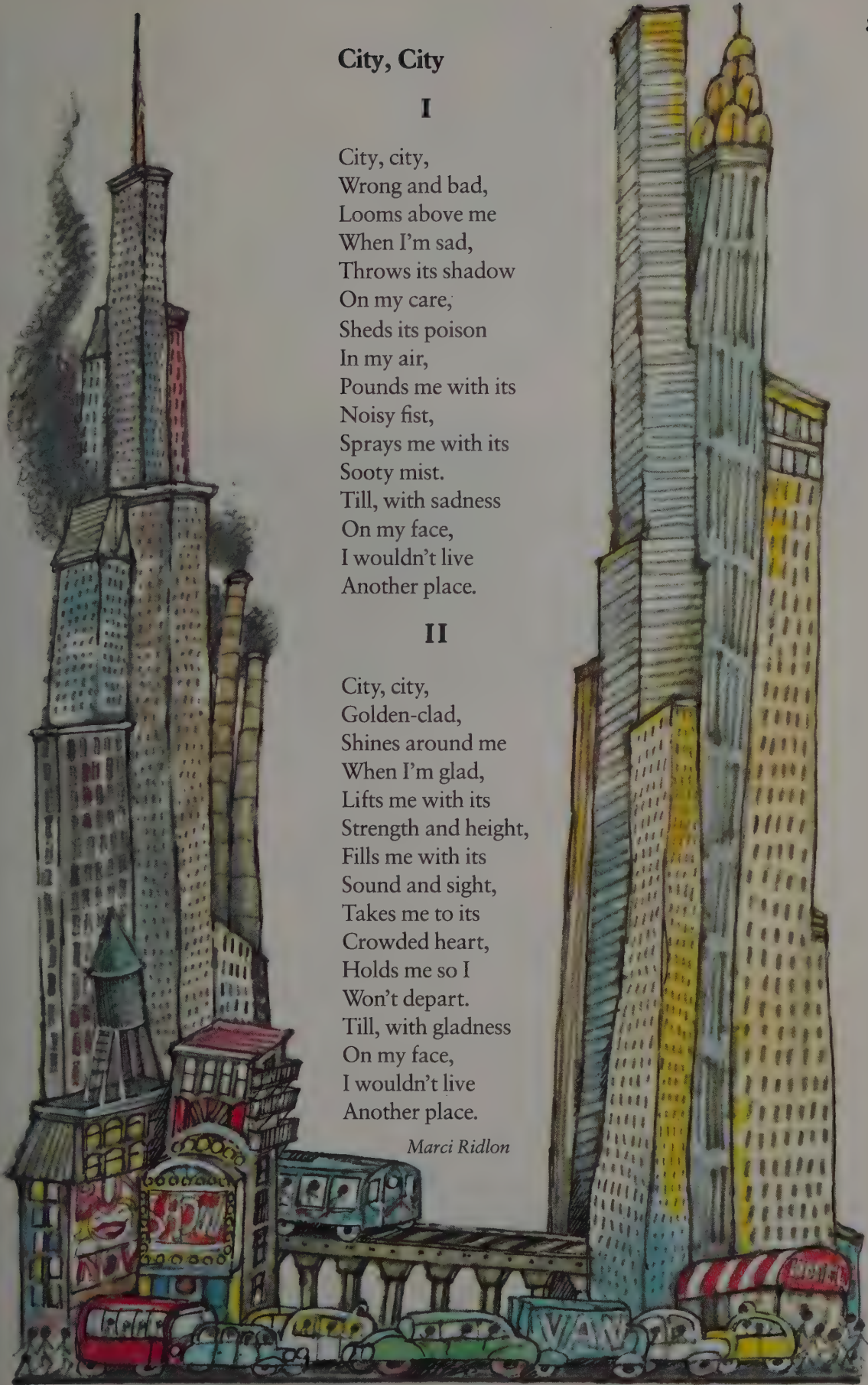
### I

City, city,  
Wrong and bad,  
Looms above me  
When I'm sad,  
Throws its shadow  
On my care;  
Sheds its poison  
In my air,  
Pounds me with its  
Noisy fist,  
Sprays me with its  
Sooty mist.  
Till, with sadness  
On my face,  
I wouldn't live  
Another place.

### II

City, city,  
Golden-clad,  
Shines around me  
When I'm glad,  
Lifts me with its  
Strength and height,  
Fills me with its  
Sound and sight,  
Takes me to its  
Crowded heart,  
Holds me so I  
Won't depart.  
Till, with gladness  
On my face,  
I wouldn't live  
Another place.

*Marci Ridlon*



## Things to Do If You Are a Subway

### Sing a Song of Subways

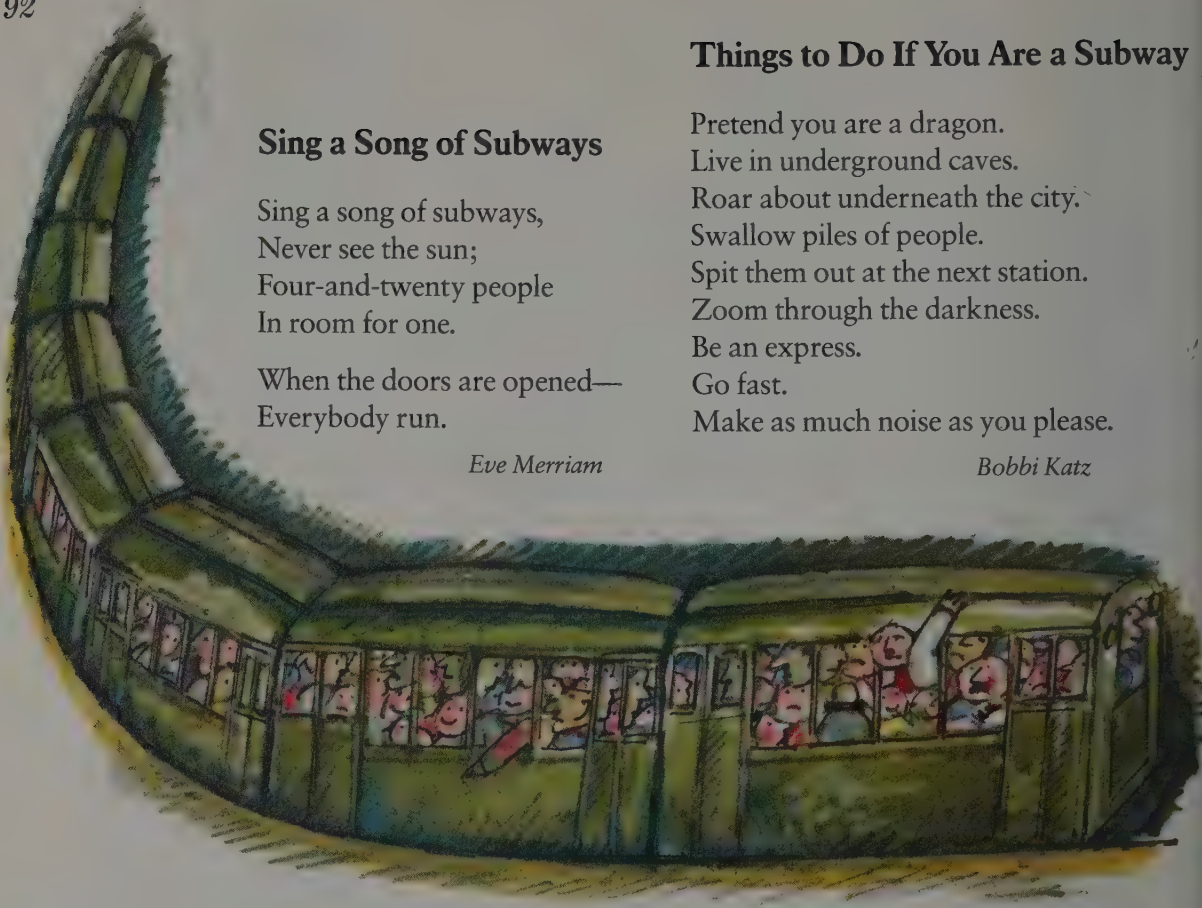
Sing a song of subways,  
Never see the sun;  
Four-and-twenty people  
In room for one.

When the doors are opened—  
Everybody run.

*Eve Merriam*

Pretend you are a dragon.  
Live in underground caves.  
Roar about underneath the city.  
Swallow piles of people.  
Spit them out at the next station.  
Zoom through the darkness.  
Be an express.  
Go fast.  
Make as much noise as you please.

*Bobbi Katz*



### Flowers Are a Silly Bunch

Flowers are a silly bunch  
While trees are sort of bossy.  
Lakes are shy  
The earth is calm  
And rivers do seem saucy.  
Hills are good  
But mountains mean  
While weeds all ask for pity.  
I guess the country can be nice  
But I prefer the city.

*Arnold Spilka*

### Rudolph Is Tired of the City

These buildings are too close to me.  
I'd like to PUSH away.  
I'd like to live in the country,  
And spread my arms all day.

I'd like to spread my breath out, too—  
As farmers' sons and daughters do.

I'd tend the cows and chickens.  
I'd do the other chores.  
Then, all the hours left I'd go  
A-SPREADING out-of-doors.

*Gwendolyn Brooks*





## That May Morning

That May morning—very early—  
As I walked the city street,  
Not a single store was open  
Any customer to greet.

That May morning—it was early—  
As I walked the avenue,  
I could stop and stare and window-shop,  
And hear the pigeons coo.

Early, early that May morning  
I could skip and jump and run  
And make shadows on the sidewalk,  
Not disturbing anyone.

All the windows, all the lamp posts,  
Every leaf on every tree  
That was growing through the sidewalk  
Seemed to be there just for me.

*Leland B. Jacobs*



## Zebra

white sun  
black  
fire escape,  
  
morning  
grazing like a zebra  
outside my window.

*Judith Thurman*

## The People Upstairs

The people upstairs all practice ballet.  
Their living room is a bowling alley.  
Their bedroom is full of conducted tours.  
Their radio is louder than yours.  
They celebrate weekends all the week.  
When they take a shower, your ceilings leak.  
They try to get their parties to mix  
By supplying their guests with Pogo sticks,  
And when their orgy at last abates,  
They go to the bathroom on roller skates.  
I might love the people upstairs wondrous  
If instead of above us, they just lived under us.

*Ogden Nash*

## Umbilical

You can take away my mother,  
you can take away my sister,  
but don't take away  
my little transistor.

I can do without sunshine,  
I can do without Spring,  
but I can't do without  
my ear to that thing.

I can live without water,  
in a hole in the ground,  
but I can't live without  
that sound that sound that sound that sOWnd.

*Eve Merriam*

## The People

The ants are walking under the ground,  
And the pigeons are flying over the steeple,  
And in between are the people.

*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*

## Sunrise

The city YAWNS  
And rubs its eyes,  
Like baking bread  
Begins to rise.

*Frank Asch*



## Crowds

Crowds pushing  
 Into the subway  
 Scare me.  
 (Maybe I'll grow out of it.)  
 Crowds rushing  
 At the traffic light  
 Make me wonder.  
 Crowds  
 Passing  
 Dashing  
 Across the honking streets  
 Carry me along.  
 Crowds that stand  
 In  
 Long  
 Lines  
 Forever  
 For a ticket,  
 For a movie,  
 I don't dig.  
 Crowds  
 Slicking  
 Up and down escalators,  
 Crowds  
 Popping out of elevators  
 Don't turn me on.  
 (Maybe I'll grow out of it.)

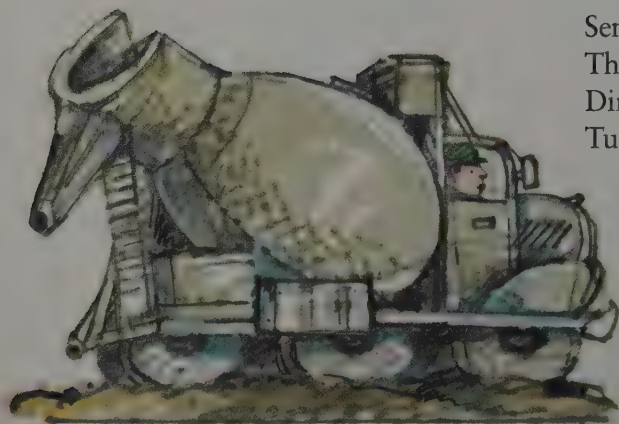
*Virginia Schonborg*



## Concrete Mixers

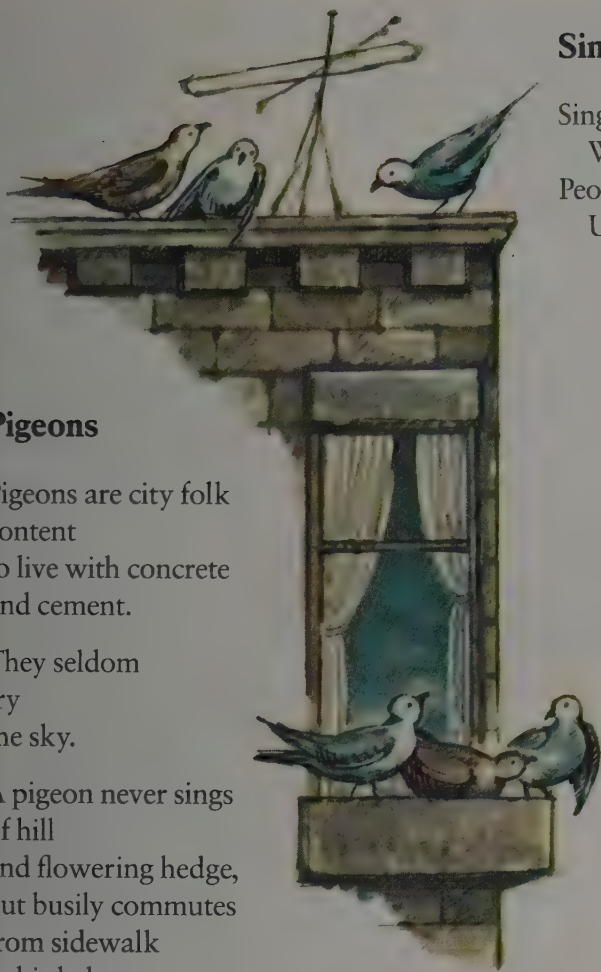
The drivers are washing the concrete mixers;  
 Like elephant tenders they hose them down.  
 Tough gray-skinned monsters standing ponderous,  
 Elephant-bellied and elephant-nosed,  
 Standing in muck up to their wheel-caps,  
 Like rows of elephants, tail to trunk.  
 Their drivers perch on their backs like mahouts,  
 Sending the sprays of water up.  
 They rid the trunk-like trough of concrete,  
 Direct the spray to the bulging sides,  
 Turn and start the monsters moving.

Concrete mixers  
 Move like elephants  
 Bellow like elephants  
 Spray like elephants,  
 Concrete mixers are urban elephants,  
 Their trunks are raising a city.



*Patricia Hubbell*





## Pigeons

Pigeons are city folk  
content  
to live with concrete  
and cement.

They seldom  
try  
the sky.

A pigeon never sings  
of hill  
and flowering hedge,  
but busily commutes  
from sidewalk  
to his ledge.

Oh pigeon, what a waste of wings!

*Lilian Moore*

## They've All Gone South

Redbird, bluebird,  
Bird with yellow mouth  
All the pretty little birds  
Have flown away south,  
But the little dusty sparrow  
With his wings of rusty brown  
For some peculiar reason  
Lingers in the town  
And little city children  
Who wouldn't know a robin  
From a cuckoo or a crow  
Will hear the little sparrows  
Chirping in the snow.

*Mary Britton Miller*

## Sing a Song of People

Sing a song of people  
Walking fast or slow;  
People in the city,  
Up and down they go.

People on the sidewalk,  
People on the bus;  
People passing, passing,  
In back and front of us.  
People on the subway  
Underneath the ground;  
People riding taxis  
Round and round and round.

People with their hats on,  
Going in the doors;  
People with umbrellas  
When it rains and pours.  
People in tall buildings  
And in stores below;  
Riding elevators  
Up and down they go.

People walking singly,  
People in a crowd;  
People saying nothing,  
People talking loud.  
People laughing, smiling,  
Grumpy people too;  
People who just hurry  
And never look at you!

Sing a song of people  
Who like to come and go;  
Sing of city people  
You see but never know!

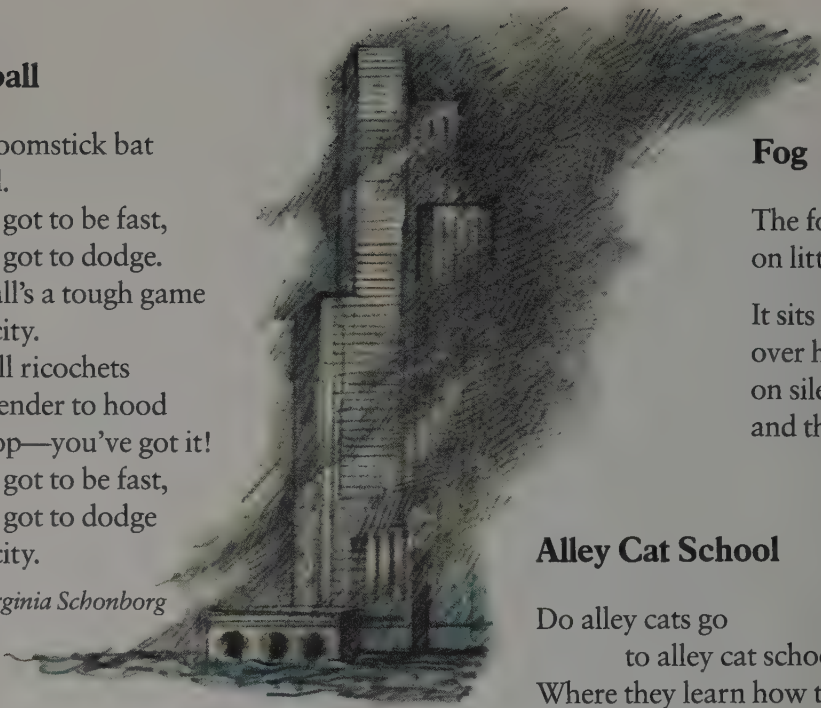
*Lois Lenski*



## Stickball

The broomstick bat  
Is good.  
You've got to be fast,  
You've got to dodge.  
Stickball's a tough game  
In the city.  
The ball ricochets  
From fender to hood  
To stoop—you've got it!  
You've got to be fast,  
You've got to dodge  
In the city.

*Virginia Schonborg*



## Fog

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.

It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

*Carl Sandburg*

## Alley Cat School

Do alley cats go  
to alley cat school?  
Where they learn how to slink  
and stay out of sight?  
Where they learn how to find  
warm and comfortable places,  
On a cold wintry night?  
Do they learn from teachers and books,  
how to topple a garbage can lid?  
Did they all go  
to alley cat school?  
Is that what they did?

*Frank Asch*

## A Sad Song About Greenwich Village

She lives in a garret  
Up a haunted stair,  
And even when she's frightened  
There's nobody to care.

She cooks so small a dinner  
She dines on the smell,  
And even if she's hungry  
There's nobody to tell.

She sweeps her musty lodging  
As the dawn steals near,  
And even when she's crying  
There's nobody to hear.

I haven't seen my neighbor  
Since a long time ago,  
And even if she's dead  
There's nobody to know.

*Frances Park*

## Open Hydrant

Water rushes up  
and gushes,  
cooling summer's sizzle.

In a sudden whoosh  
it rushes,  
not a little drizzle.

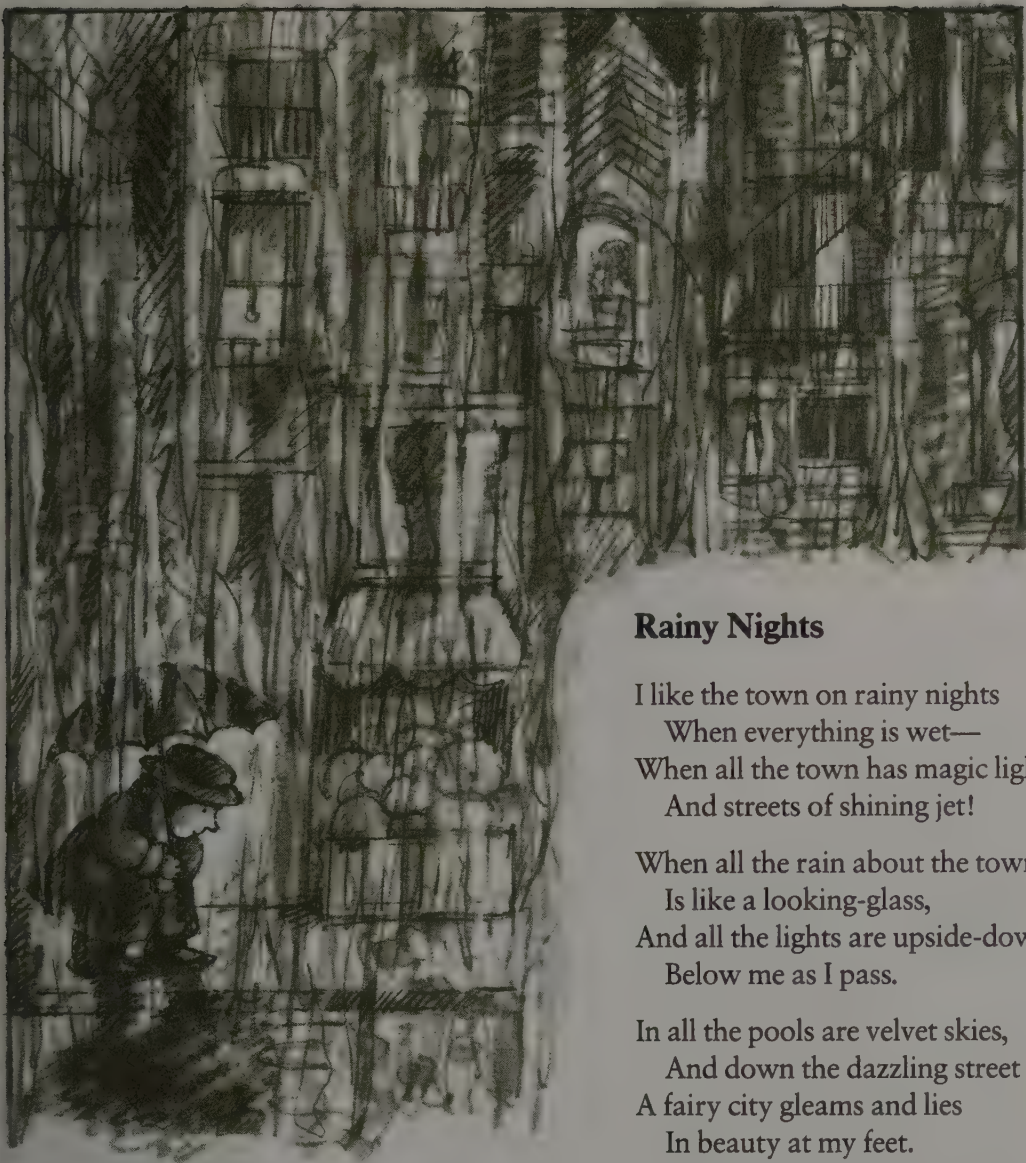
First a hush and down  
it crashes,  
over curbs it swishes.

Just a luscious waterfall  
for  
cooling city fishes.

*Marci Ridlon*







### Rainy Nights

I like the town on rainy nights  
 When everything is wet—  
 When all the town has magic lights  
 And streets of shining jet!

When all the rain about the town  
 Is like a looking-glass,  
 And all the lights are upside-down  
 Below me as I pass.

In all the pools are velvet skies,  
 And down the dazzling street  
 A fairy city gleams and lies  
 In beauty at my feet.

*Irene Thompson*

### April Rain Song

Let the rain kiss you.  
 Let the rain beat upon your head with silver  
 liquid drops.  
 Let the rain sing you a lullaby.  
 The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.  
 The rain makes running pools in the gutter.  
 The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at  
 night—  
 And I love the rain.

*Langston Hughes*

### City Lights

Into the endless dark  
 The lights of the buildings shine,  
 Row upon twinkling row,  
 Line upon glistening line.  
 Up and up they mount  
 Till the tallest seems to be  
 The topmost taper set  
 On a towering Christmas tree.

*Rachel Field*



## City

In the morning the city  
Spreads its wings  
Making a song  
In stone that sings.

In the evening the city  
Goes to bed  
Hanging lights  
About its head.

*Langston Hughes*

## Where Are You Now?

When the night begins to fall  
And the sky begins to glow  
You look up and see the tall  
City of light begin to grow—  
In rows and little golden squares  
The lights come out. First here, then there  
Behind the windowpanes as though  
A million billion bees had built  
Their golden hives and honeycombs  
Above you in the air.

*Mary Britton Miller*

## Frightening

Here it comes!  
huge hulk  
in the darkness  
the long freighter  
blacker than the water  
silent as a ghostship  
stealing by  
slowly  
down the dark river.

*Claudia Lewis*

## The City Dump

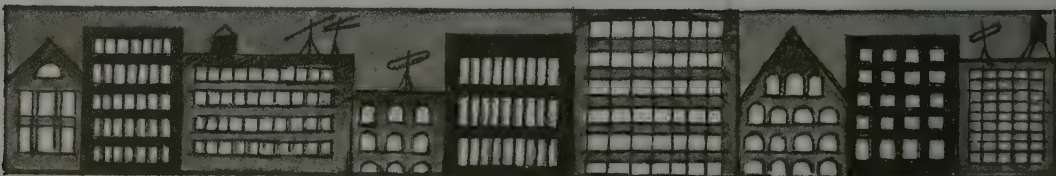
City asleep  
City asleep  
Papers fly at the garbage heap  
Refuse dumped and  
The sea gulls reap  
Grapefruit rinds  
And coffee grinds  
And apple peels.  
The sea gull reels and  
The field mouse steals  
In for a bite  
At the end of night  
Of crusts and crumbs  
And pits of plums.  
The white eggshells  
And the green-blue smells  
And the gray gull's cry  
And the red dawn sky. . . .  
City asleep  
City asleep  
A carnival  
On the garbage heap.

*Felice Holman*

## Foghorns

The foghorns moaned  
in the bay last night  
so sad  
so deep  
I thought I heard the city  
crying in its sleep.

*Lilian Moore*





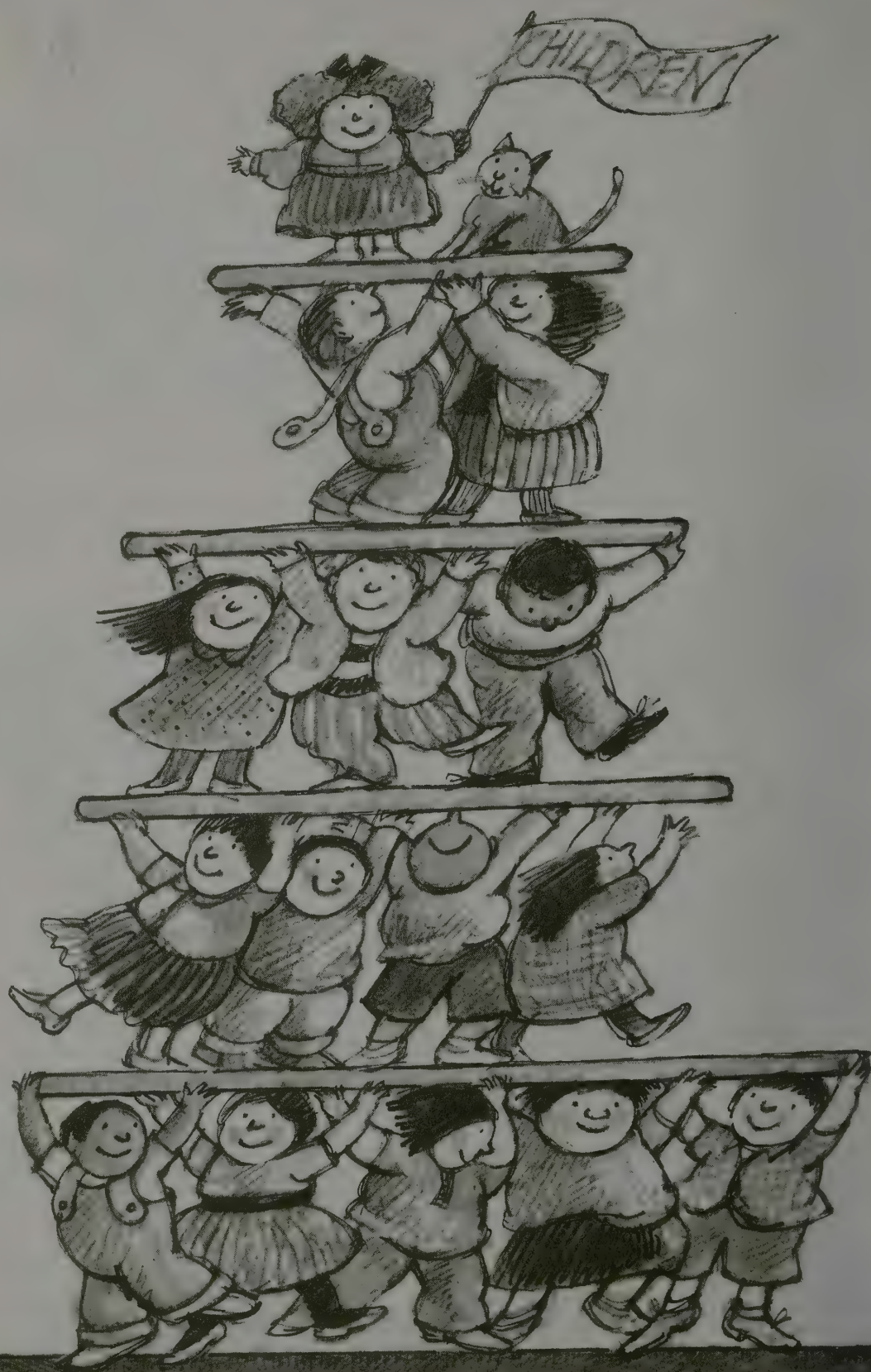
## Cockpit in the Clouds

Two thousand feet beneath our wheels  
 The city sprawls across the land  
 Like heaps of children's blocks outflung,  
 In tantrums, by a giant hand.  
 To east a silver spire soars  
 And seeks to pierce our lower wing.  
 Above its grasp we drift along,  
 A tiny, droning, shiny thing.

The noon crowds pack the narrow streets.  
 The el trains move so slow, so slow.  
 Amidst their traffic, chaos, life,  
 The city's busy millions go.  
 Up here, aloof, we watch them crawl.  
 In crystal air we seem to poise  
 Behind our motor's throaty roar—  
*Down there, we're just another noise.*

*Dick Dorrance*







# CHILDREN, CHILDREN EVERYWHERE

- Children, children everywhere,  
children dark and children fair,  
children of all shapes and sizes,  
children springing odd surprises,  
children chasing, running races,  
children laughing, making faces,  
children cooking mud for dinner,  
children, every one a winner.

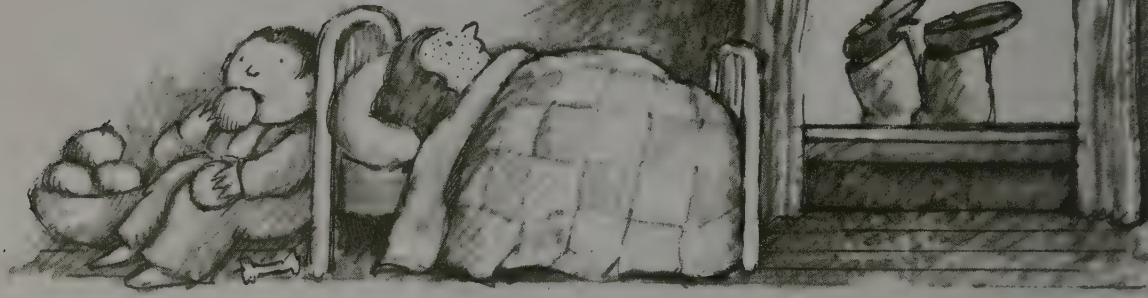
Children jumping, children wiggling,  
children grumping, children giggling,  
children singing, sneezing, weeping,  
children sometimes even sleeping,  
children giving children hugs,  
children chewing worms and bugs,  
children in their parents' hair,  
children, children everywhere.



## Advice to Small Children

Eat no green apples or you'll droop,  
Be careful not to get the croup,  
Avoid the chicken-pox and such,  
And don't fall out of windows much.

*Edward Anthony*



## Hug O' War

I will not play at tug o' war.  
I'd rather play at hug o' war,  
Where everyone hugs  
Instead of tugs,  
Where everyone giggles  
And rolls on the rug,  
Where everyone kisses,  
And everyone grins,  
And everyone cuddles,  
And everyone wins.

*Shel Silverstein*

## The Joke

The joke you just told isn't funny one bit.  
It's pointless and dull, wholly lacking in  
wit.  
It's so old and stale, it's beginning to  
smell!  
Besides, it's the one I was going to tell.

*Anonymous*

## Changing

I know what *I* feel like;  
I'd like to be *you*  
And feel what *you* feel like  
And do what *you* do.  
I'd like to change places  
For maybe a week  
And look like your look-like  
And speak as you speak  
And think what you're thinking  
And go where you go  
And feel what you're feeling  
And know what you know.  
I wish we could do it;  
What fun it would be  
If I could try you out  
And you could try me.

*Mary Ann Hoberman*



## Somebody

Somebody loves you deep and true.  
If I weren't so bashful, I'd tell you who.

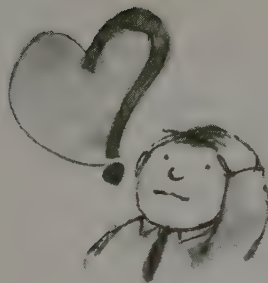
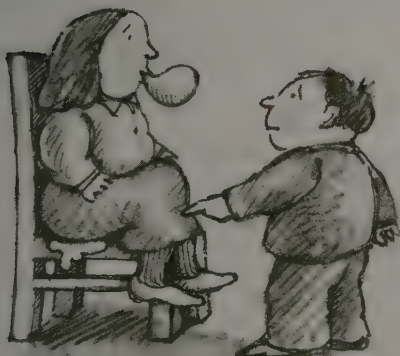
*Anonymous*



## I Love You

I love you, I love you,  
I love you divine,  
Please give me your bubble gum,  
You're *sitting* on mine!

*Anonymous*



## Question

Do you love me  
Or do you not?  
You told me once  
But I forgot.

*Anonymous*

## Love

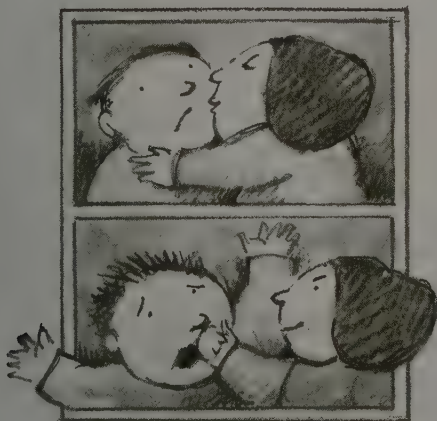
I love you, I like you,  
I really do like you.  
I do *not* want to strike you,  
I do *not* want to shove you.  
I *do* want to like you,  
I *do* want to love you;  
And like you and love you  
And love you and love you.

*William Jay Smith*

## Huckleberry, Gooseberry, Raspberry Pie

Huckleberry, gooseberry, raspberry pie  
All sweetest things one cannot buy.  
Peppermint candies are six for a penny,  
But true love & kisses, one cannot buy any.

*Clyde Watson*



## I Saw a Little Girl I Hate

I saw a little girl I hate  
And kicked her with my toes.  
She turned  
And smiled  
And KISSED me!  
Then she punched me in the nose.

*Arnold Spilka*

## I Hate Harry

I hate Harry like . . . like . . . OOO!  
 I hate Harry like . . . GEE!  
 I hate that Harry like—poison.  
 I hate! hate! hate! HAR-RY!

Rat! Dope! Skunk! Bum! Liar!  
 Dumber than the dumbest dumb flea!  
 BOY! . . . do I hate Harry,  
 I hate him the most that can be.

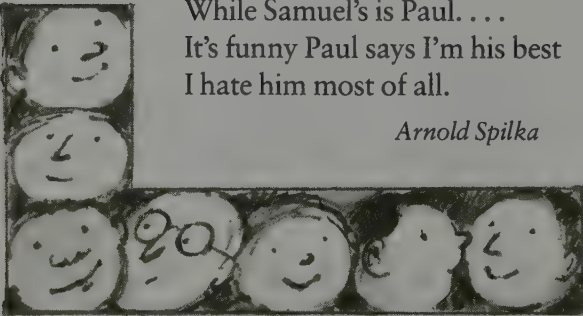
I hate him a hundred, thousand, million  
 Doubled, and multiplied by three,  
 A skillion, trillion, zillion more times  
 Than Harry, that rat, hates me.

*Miriam Chaikin*

## Puzzle

My best friend's name is Billy  
 But his best friend is Fred  
 And Fred's is Willy Wiffleson  
 And Willy's best is Ted.  
 Ted's best pal is Samuel  
 While Samuel's is Paul. . . .  
 It's funny Paul says I'm his best  
 I hate him most of all.

*Arnold Spilka*



## John, Tom, and James

John was a bad boy, and beat a poor cat;  
 Tom put a stone in a blind man's hat;  
 James was the boy who neglected his prayers;  
 They've all grown up ugly, and nobody cares.

*Charles Henry Ross*



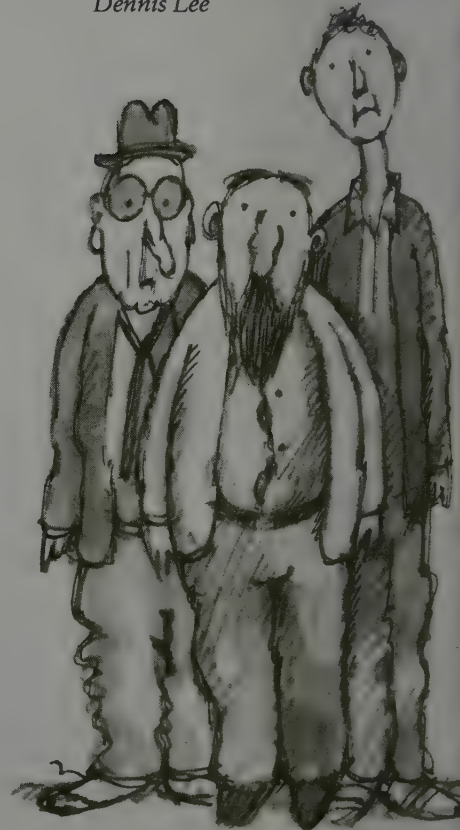
## Double-Barreled Ding-Dong-Bat

Why,  
 You—

Double-barreled,  
 Disconnected,  
 Supersonic  
 Ding-dong-bat:

Don't you dare come  
 Near me, or I'll  
 Disconnect you  
 Just like that!

*Dennis Lee*







## There Was a Little Girl

There was a little girl, who had a little curl  
 Right in the middle of her forehead,  
 And when she was good, she was very, very good,  
 But when she was bad she was horrid.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

## Yip-yap Rattletrap

Yip-yap Rattletrap  
 Prating noisy Pest  
 Stuff a Muffin in your Mouth  
 And let my poor Ears rest!

*Clyde Watson*

## Tag Along

Sing song  
 Tag along  
 Standing by the wall

Crank pot  
 Whine a lot  
 Just because you're small

Big shot  
 Red hot  
 Go and wilt a flower

Rough tough  
 Mean enough  
 To make the milk turn sour

*Nina Payne*

## Two People

Two people live in Rosamund,  
 And one is very nice;  
 The other is devoted  
 To every kind of vice—

To walking where the puddles are,  
 And eating far too quick,  
 And saying words she shouldn't know,  
 And wanting spoons to lick.

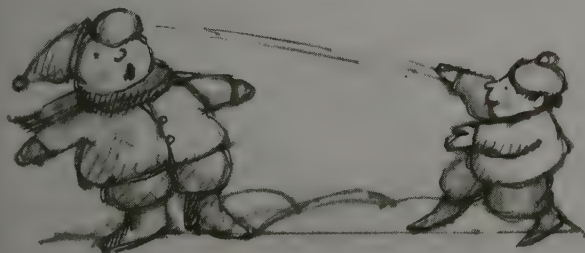
Two people live in Rosamund,  
 And one (I say it twice)  
 Is very nice *and* very good:  
 The other's only nice.

*E. V. Rieu*

## Read This with Gestures

It isn't proper, I guess you know,  
 To dip your hands—like this—in the snow,  
 And make a snowball, and look for a hat,  
 And try to knock it off—like that!

*John Ciardi*



## Ten Kinds

Winnie Whiney, all things grieve her;  
 Fannie Fibber, who'd believe her?  
 Lotty Loozem, late to school, sir;  
 Albert Allplay, quite a fool, sir;  
 Kitty Kissem, loved by many;  
 George Grump, not loved by any;  
 Ralph Ruff—beware his fist, sir;  
 Tillie Tattle, like a blister;  
 Gus Goodactin, bright and cheery;  
 Sammy Selfish, sour and dreary.  
 Do you know them, as I've sung them?  
 Easy 'tis to choose among them.

*Mary Mapes Dodge*

## Table Manners

The Goops they lick their fingers,  
 And the Goops they lick their knives;  
 They spill their broth on the tablecloth—  
 Oh, they lead disgusting lives!  
 The Goops they talk while eating,  
 And loud and fast they chew;  
 And that is why I'm glad that I  
 Am not a Goop—are you?



*Gelett Burgess*

### Jack

That's Jack;  
 Lay a stick on his back!  
 What's he done? I cannot say.  
 We'll find out tomorrow,  
 And beat him today.

*Charles Henry Ross*

### Bubble Gum

I'm in trouble  
 made a bubble  
 peeled it off my nose

Felt a rock  
 inside my sock  
 got gum between my toes

Made another  
 told my brother  
 we could blow a pair

Give three cheers  
 now our ears  
 are sticking to our hair.

*Nina Payne*

## Why Run?

Jane won't touch a caterpillar,  
 Mary's frightened of a mouse,  
 Sally shrieks and runs for Daddy  
 When a moth flies in the house.  
 Pam's afraid of shiny beetles,  
 Spiders make Melinda squirm,  
 Susan nearly has HYS-TER-ICS  
 If you chase her with a worm!

Aren't they foolish to be frightened?  
 Fancy making such a fuss  
 Over harmless creepy-crawlies  
 Who are scared to death—of US.

*Norah Smaridge*

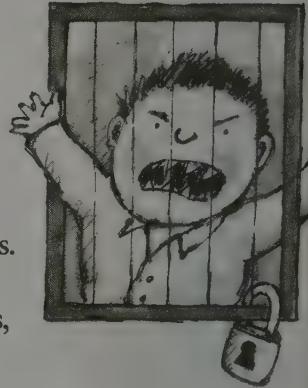
## Did You?

Having little kids around, they say, is truly bliss;  
 But did you ever hear of any little kid like this?

He swallows pits,  
 Has temper fits,  
 Spills the ink,  
 And clogs the sink.  
 And, oh my gosh!  
 He hates to wash!  
 He plays with matches,  
 And grabs and snatches.  
 He scrawls on walls,  
 And sprawls and bawls,  
 And argues and fights,  
 And kicks and bites. . . .

You say you never heard of  
 any kid like that, you do—  
 Well, I know one who's  
*just* like that and it's

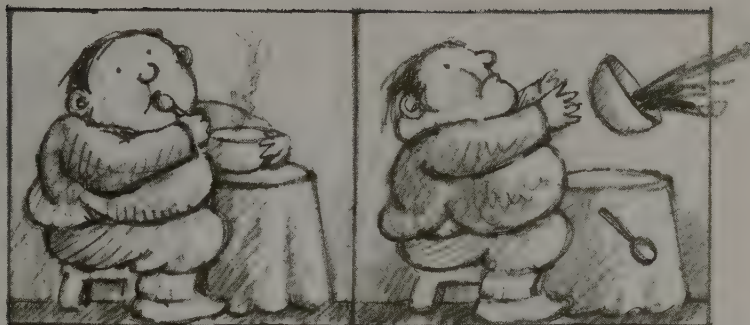
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 O  
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*William Cole*







## The Story of Augustus Who Would Not Have Any Soup

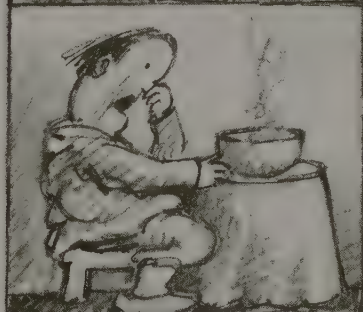
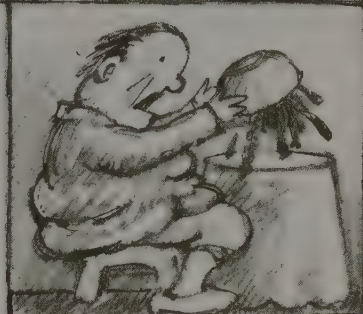
Augustus was a chubby lad;  
 Fat ruddy cheeks Augustus had:  
 And everybody saw with joy  
 The plump and hearty, healthy boy.  
 He ate and drank as he was told,  
 And never let his soup get cold.  
 But one day, one cold winter's day,  
 He screamed out "Take the soup away!  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I won't have any soup today."

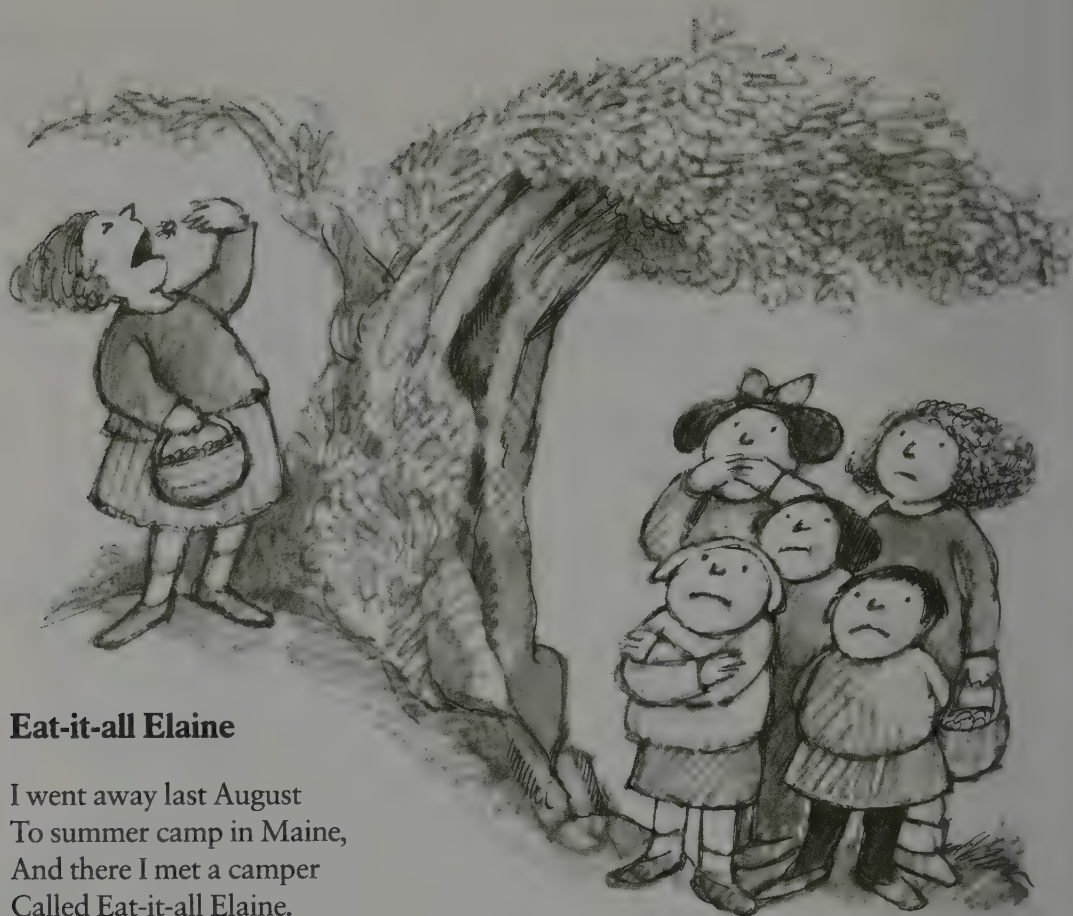
Next day, now look, the picture shows  
 How lank and lean Augustus grows!  
 Yet, though he feels so weak and ill,  
 The naughty fellow cries out still  
 "Not any soup for me, I say:  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I *won't* have any soup today."

The third day comes: Oh what a sin!  
 To make himself so pale and thin.  
 Yet, when the soup is put on table,  
 He screams, as loud as he is able,  
 "Not any soup for me, I say:  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I *WON'T* have any soup today."

Look at him, now the fourth day's come!  
 He scarcely weighs a sugar-plum;  
 He's like a little bit of thread,  
 And, on the fifth day, he was—dead!

Heinrich Hoffmann





### Eat-it-all Elaine

I went away last August  
To summer camp in Maine,  
And there I met a camper  
Called Eat-it-all Elaine.  
Although Elaine was quiet,  
She liked to cause a stir  
By acting out the nickname  
Her camp-mates gave to her.

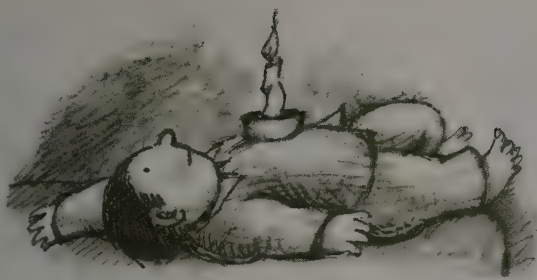
The day of our arrival  
At Cabin Number Three  
When girls kept coming over  
To greet Elaine and me,  
She took a piece of Kleenex  
And calmly chewed it up,  
Then strolled outside the cabin  
And ate a buttercup.

Elaine, from that day forward,  
Was always in command.  
On hikes, she'd eat some birch-bark.  
On swims, she'd eat some sand.  
At meals, she'd swallow prune-pits  
And never have a pain,  
While everyone around her  
Would giggle, "Oh, Elaine!"

One morning, berry-picking,  
A bug was in her pail,  
And though we thought for certain  
Her appetite would fail,  
Elaine said, "Hmm, a stinkbug."  
And while we murmured, "Ooh,"  
She ate her pail of berries  
And ate the stinkbug, too.

The night of Final Banquet  
When counselors were handing  
Awards to different children  
Whom they believed outstanding,  
To every *thinking* person  
At summer camp in Maine  
The Most Outstanding Camper  
Was Eat-it-all Elaine.





## Tired Tim

Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him  
 He lags the long bright morning through,  
 Ever so tired of nothing to do;  
 He moons and mopes the livelong day,  
 Nothing to think about, nothing to say;  
 Up to bed with his candle to creep,  
 Too tired to yawn, too tired to sleep:  
 Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.

*Walter de la Mare*

## Wendy in Winter

No wonder Wendy's coat blew off.  
 She didn't have it zipped.  
 And—since she didn't watch for slush—  
 No wonder Wendy slipped.  
 No wonder Wendy froze her feet  
 Although her boots were lined,  
 Because when Wendy left for school  
 She left her boots behind.  
 And since she didn't dodge the ice  
 That sagged an apple bough,  
 No wonder Wendy's hatless head  
 Has seven stitches now.

*Kaye Starbird*



## Queenie

Queenie's strong and Queenie's tall.  
 You should see her bat a ball,  
 Ride a bike, or climb a wall.  
 (Queenie's not her name at all.)

Queenie's nimble, Queenie's quick.  
 You should see her throw a stick,  
 Watch her saw a board that's thick,  
 See her do her tumbling trick.

Queenie's not afraid, like me,  
 Of snakes or climbing up a tree.  
 (I think that's why the boys agree,  
 Queenie's what her name should be.)

*Leland B. Jacobs*



## Fernando

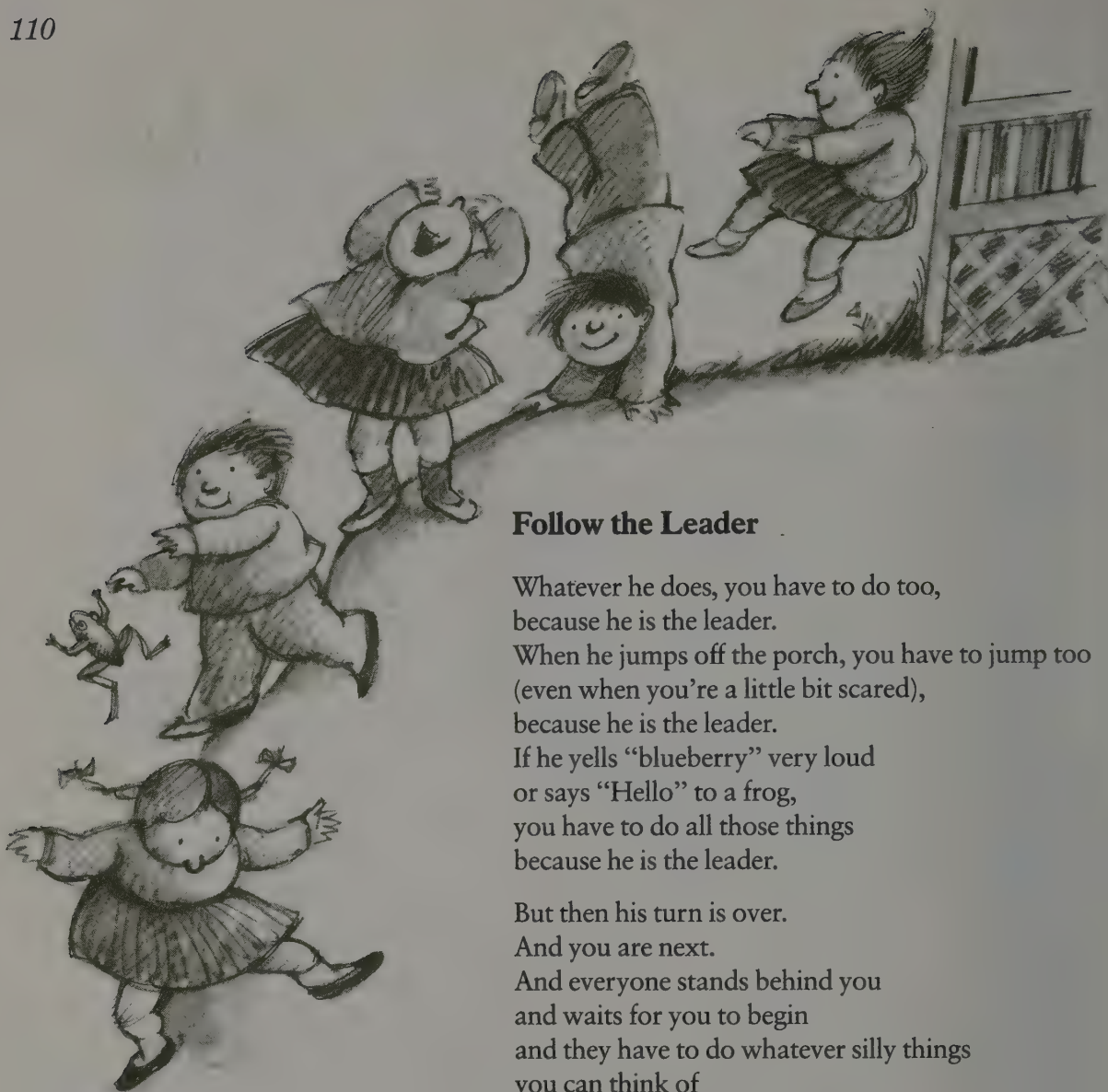
Fernando has a basketball.  
 He tap, tap, taps it down the hall,  
 then leaps up high and shoots with care.  
 The fact a basket isn't there,  
 he totally dismisses.  
 He says he never misses.  
 My crazy friend Fernando.

*Marci Ridlon*

## Tony Baloney

Tony Baloney is fibbing again—  
 Look at him wiggle and try to pretend.  
 Tony Baloney is telling a lie:  
 Phony old Tony Baloney, goodbye!

*Dennis Lee*



### Follow the Leader

Whatever he does, you have to do too,  
because he is the leader.  
When he jumps off the porch, you have to jump too  
(even when you're a little bit scared),  
because he is the leader.  
If he yells "blueberry" very loud  
or says "Hello" to a frog,  
you have to do all those things  
because he is the leader.

But then his turn is over.  
And you are next.  
And everyone stands behind you  
and waits for you to begin  
and they have to do whatever silly things  
you can think of  
because YOU are the leader now.

*Kathleen Fraser*

### Jessica Jane

Jessica Jane is the kind of cook  
Who doesn't need a recipe book.  
Little trouble indeed she takes  
When she makes puddings and pies and cakes.  
With a twist of her wrist and a pat-a-pat  
She turns them out in a row—like that!  
There in a row in the summer sun  
They bake and bake till they're all well done.  
Grocery problems are not for her—  
She has plenty of mud and a stick to stir.

*May Justus*



### Freddy

Here is the story  
Of Freddy, my friend,  
Who ran out in the traffic,  
And that is the end.

*Dennis Lee*



## Girls Can, Too!

Tony said: "Boys are better!  
They can . . .

whack a ball,  
ride a bike with one hand  
leap off a wall."

I just listened  
and when he was through,  
I laughed and said:

"Oh, yeah! Well, girls can, too!"

Then I leaped off the wall,  
and rode away  
With *his* 200 baseball cards  
I won that day.

*Lee Bennet Hopkins*

## Little Clotilda

Little Clotilda,  
Well and hearty,  
Thought she'd like  
To give a party.  
But as her friends  
Were shy and wary,  
Nobody came  
But her own canary.

*Anonymous*



## We're Racing, Racing down the Walk

We're racing, racing down the walk,  
Over the pavement and round the block.  
We rumble along till the sidewalk ends—  
Felicia and I and half our friends.  
Our hair flies backward. It's whish and whirr!  
She roars at me and I shout at her  
As past the porches and garden gates  
We rattle and rock  
On our roller skates.

*Phyllis McGinley*



## No Girls Allowed

When we're playing tag  
and the girls want to play,  
we yell and we scream  
and we chase them away.

When we're playing stickball  
or racing our toys  
and the girls ask to join,  
we say, "Only for boys."

We play hide-and-go-seek  
and the girls wander near.  
They say, "Please let us hide."  
We pretend not to hear.

We don't care for girls  
so we don't let them in,  
we think that they're dumb—  
and besides, they might win.

*Jack Prelutsky*



## maggie and milly and molly and may

maggie and millie and molly and may  
went down to the beach(to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles,and

milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lost(like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

*e. e. cummings*

## Wrestling

I like wrestling with Herbie because  
he's my best friend.  
We poke each other  
(but not very hard)  
and punch each other  
(but not very hard)  
and roll on the grass  
and pretend to have fights  
just to make our sisters scream.  
But sometimes if he hits me too much  
and it hurts,  
I get mad  
and I punch him back  
as hard as I can  
and then we both are crying  
and going into our houses  
and slamming our back doors on each other.  
But the next day, if it's sunny,  
we come out into our yards  
and grin at each other,  
and sometimes he gives me an apple  
or I give him a cookie and  
then we start wrestling again.

*Kathleen Fraser*







## Measles

The few times back in the early fall  
When kids had measles  
And stayed home sick,  
Our classroom teacher would have us all  
Writing them letters  
To get well quick.

But now, when most of the kids in school  
Are out with measles  
They somehow catch,  
Our teacher's suddenly changed her rule  
And just ignores them  
And lets them scratch.

She says that lately we all get measle-y  
*Much* too easily.

*Kaye Starbird*



## Wiggly Giggles

I've got the wiggly-wiggles today,  
And I just can't sit still.  
My teacher says she'll have to find  
A stop-me-wiggle pill.

I've got the giggly-giggles today;  
I couldn't tell you why.  
But if Mary hiccups one more time  
I'll giggle till I cry.

I've got to stamp my wiggles out  
And hold my giggles in,  
Cause wiggling makes me giggle  
And gigglers never win.

*Stacy Jo Crossen  
and Natalie Anne Covell*

## Barbershop

When you visit the barber  
And sit in his chair,  
Don't squirm  
Like a worm  
While he's cutting your hair.

Don't shiver  
And quiver  
And bounce up and down.  
Don't shuffle  
And snuffle  
And act like a clown.

Each wiggle  
Will jiggle  
The blades of the shears.

Clip-clip,  
Clip-clip.  
Those scissors can slip  
And snip  
Off a tip  
Of one of your tender pink ears!

*Martin Gardner*



## Since Hanna Moved Away

The tires on my bike are flat.  
The sky is grouchy gray.  
At least it sure feels like that  
Since Hanna moved away.

Chocolate ice cream tastes like  
prunes.  
December's come to stay.  
They've taken back the Mays and  
Junes  
Since Hanna moved away.

Flowers smell like halibut.  
Velvet feels like hay.  
Every handsome dog's a mutt  
Since Hanna moved away.

Nothing's fun to laugh about.  
Nothing's fun to play.  
They call me, but I won't come  
out  
Since Hanna moved away.

*Judith Viorst*

## A Lullaby

Speak roughly to your little boy,  
And beat him when he sneezes:  
He only does it to annoy,  
Because he knows it teases.

Wow! wow! wow!

I speak severely to my boy,  
I beat him when he sneezes;  
For he can thoroughly enjoy  
The pepper when he pleases!

Wow! wow! wow!

*Lewis Carroll*

## What in the World?

What in the world  
goes whiskery friskery  
meowling and prowling  
napping and lapping  
at silky milk?

Psst,  
What is it?

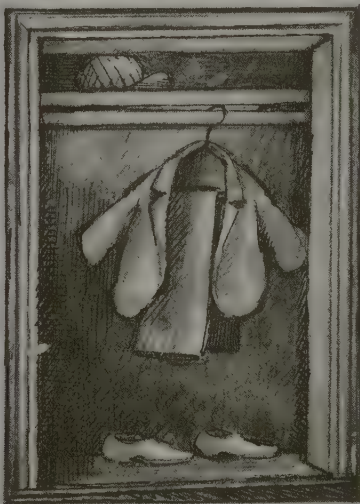
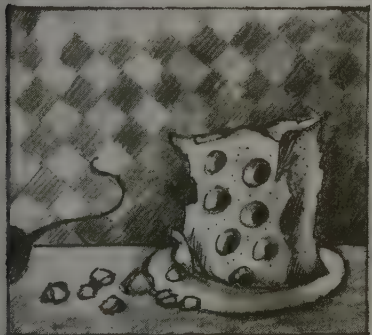
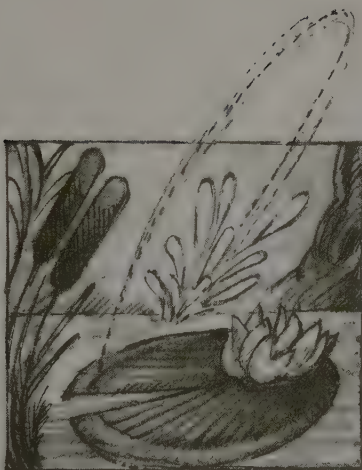
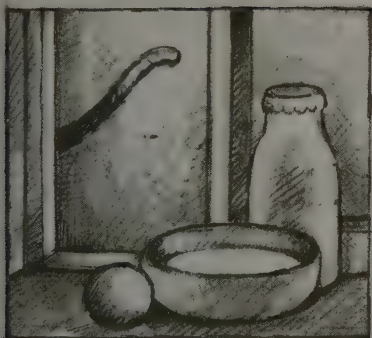
What in the world  
goes leaping and beeping  
onto a lily pad onto a log  
onto a tree stump or down to the bog?  
Splash, blurp,  
Kerchurp!

What in the World  
goes gnawing and pawing  
scratching and latching  
sniffing and squiffing  
nibbling for tidbits of leftover cheese?  
Please?

What in the world  
jumps with a hop and a bump  
and a tail that can thump  
has pink pointy ears and a twitchy nose  
looking for anything crunchy that grows?  
A carrotty lettuceey cabbagey luncheon  
To munch on?







What in the world  
 climbs chattering pattering swinging from trees  
 like a flying trapeze  
 with a tail that can curl  
 like the rope cowboys twirl?  
 Wahoo!  
 Here's a banana for you!

What in the world  
 goes stalking and balking  
 running and sunning  
 thumping and dumping  
 lugging and hugging  
 swinging and singing  
 wriggling and giggling  
 sliding and hiding  
 throwing and knowing and  
 growing and growing  
 much too big for  
 last year's clothes?

Who knows?





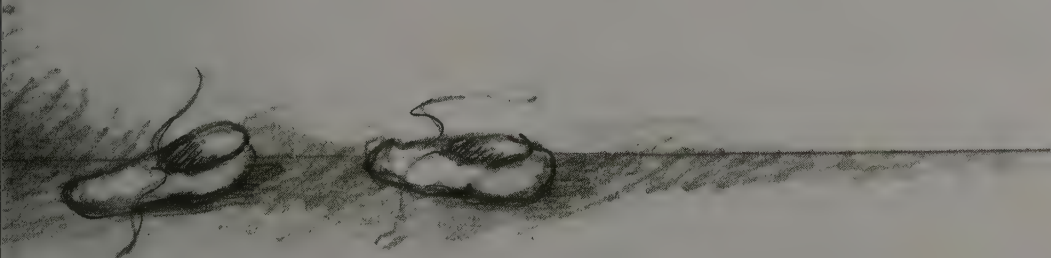
# ME I AM!

*I am the only ME I AM  
who qualifies as me;  
no ME I AM has been before,  
and none will ever be.*

*No other ME I AM can feel  
the feelings I've within;  
no other ME I AM can fit  
precisely in my skin.*

*There is no other ME I AM  
who thinks the thoughts I do;  
the world contains one ME I AM,  
there is no room for two.*

*I am the only ME I AM  
this earth shall ever see;  
that ME I AM I always am  
is no one else but ME!*





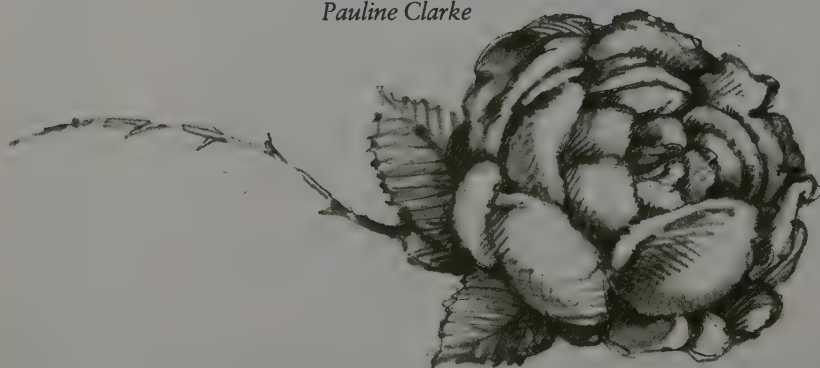
### My Name Is . . .

My name is Sluggery-wuggery  
 My name is Worms-for-tea  
 My name is Swallow-the-table-leg  
 My name is Drink-the-Sea.

My name is I-eat-saucepans  
 My name is I-like-snails  
 My name is Grand-piano-George  
 My name is I-ride-whales.

My name is Jump-the-chimney  
 My name is Bite-my-knee  
 My name is Jiggery-pokery  
 And Riddle-me-ree, and ME.

*Pauline Clarke*



### Me

As long as I live  
 I shall always be  
 My Self—and no other,  
 Just me.

Like a tree—  
 Willow, elder,  
 Aspen, thorn,  
 Or cypress forlorn.

Like a flower,  
 For its hour—

Primrose, or pink,  
 Or a violet—  
 Sunned by the sun,  
 And with dewdrops wet.

Always just me.  
 Till the day come on  
 When I leave this body,  
 It's all then done,  
 And the spirit within it  
 Is gone.

*Walter de la Mare*

### My Father Owns the Butcher Shop

My father owns the butcher shop,  
 My mother cuts the meat,  
 And I'm the little hot dog  
 That runs around the street.

*Anonymous*

### I Am Rose

I am Rose my eyes are blue  
 I am Rose and who are you?  
 I am Rose and when I sing  
 I am Rose like anything.

*Gertrude Stein*



## The Reason I Like Chocolate

The reason I like chocolate  
is I can lick my fingers  
and nobody tells me I'm not polite

I especially like scary movies  
'cause I can snuggle with Mommy  
or my big sister and they don't laugh

I like to cry sometimes 'cause  
everybody says "what's the matter  
don't cry"

and I like books  
for all those reasons  
but mostly 'cause they just make me  
happy

and I really like  
to be happy

*Nikki Giovanni*

## Every Time I Climb a Tree

Every time I climb a tree  
Every time I climb a tree  
Every time I climb a tree  
I scrape a leg  
Or skin a knee  
And every time I climb a tree  
I find some ants  
Or dodge a bee  
And get the ants  
All over me

And every time I climb a tree  
Where have you been?  
They say to me  
But don't they know that I am free  
Every time I climb a tree?  
I like it best  
To spot a nest  
That has an egg  
or maybe three

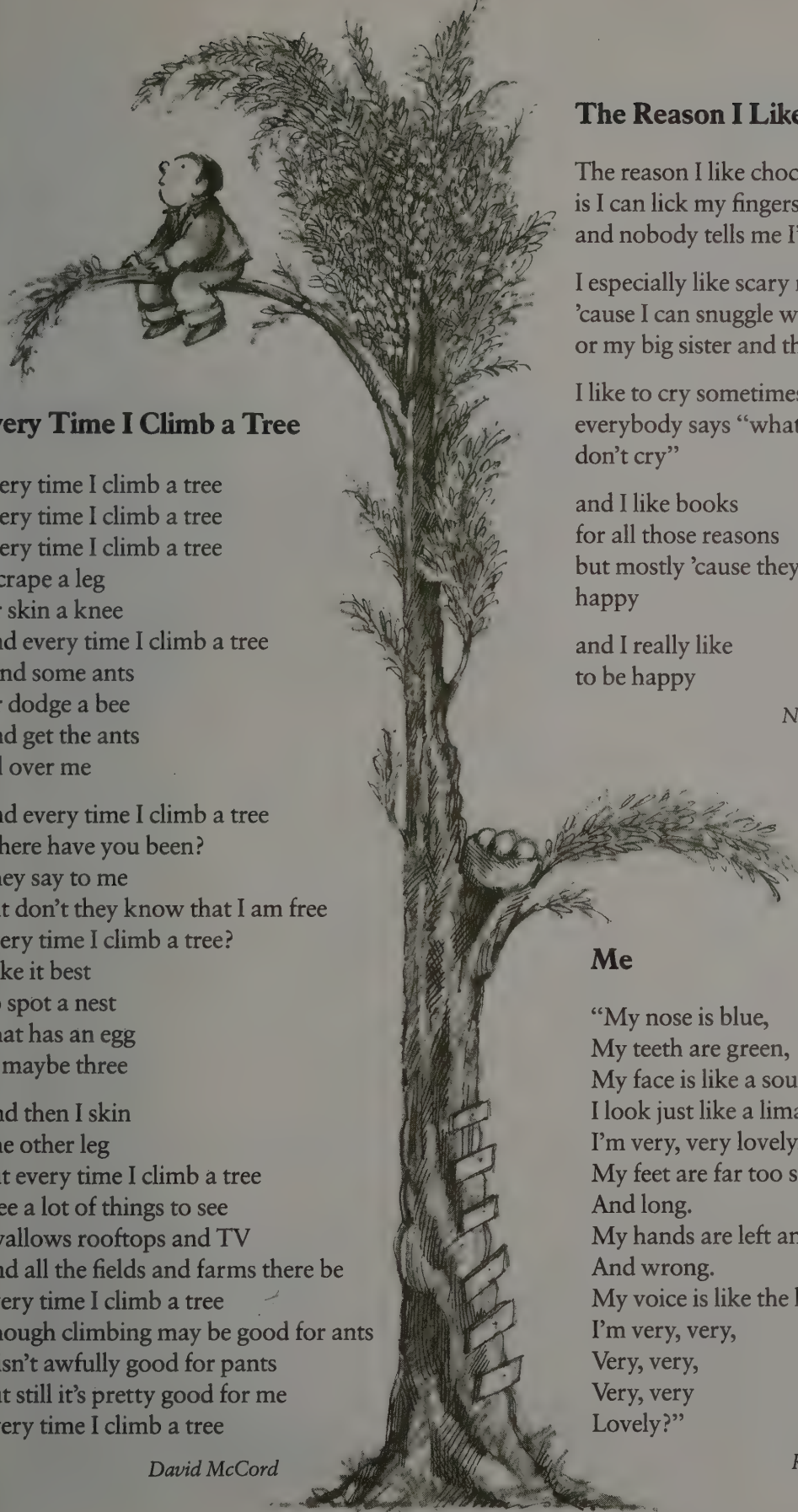
And then I skin  
The other leg  
But every time I climb a tree  
I see a lot of things to see  
Swallows rooftops and TV  
And all the fields and farms there be  
Every time I climb a tree  
Though climbing may be good for ants  
It isn't awfully good for pants  
But still it's pretty good for me  
Every time I climb a tree

*David McCord*

## Me

"My nose is blue,  
My teeth are green,  
My face is like a soup tureen.  
I look just like a lima bean.  
I'm very, very lovely.  
My feet are far too short  
And long.  
My hands are left and right  
And wrong.  
My voice is like the hippo's song.  
I'm very, very,  
Very, very,  
Very, very  
Lovely?"

*Karla Kuskin*



## Mark's Fingers

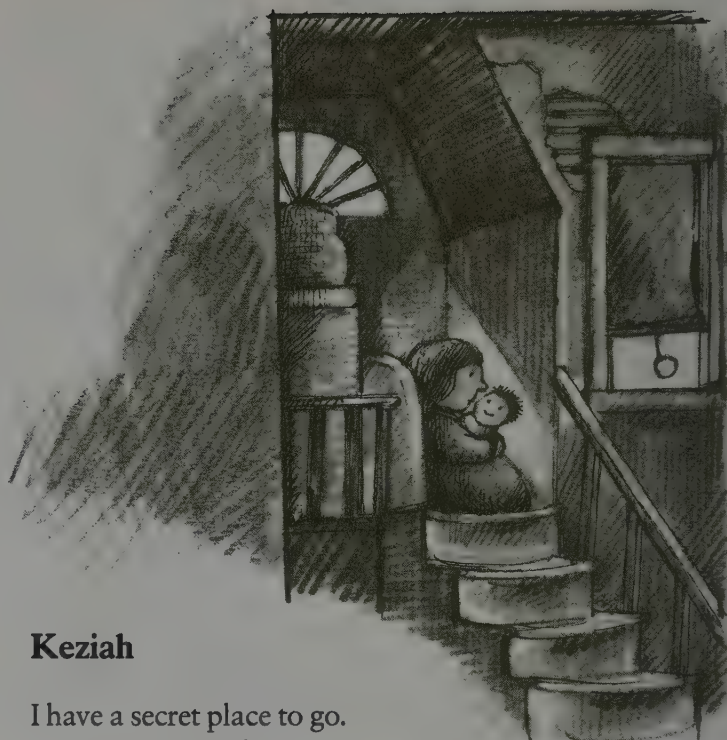
I like my fingers.  
 They grip a ball,  
 Turn a page,  
 Break a fall,  
 Help whistle  
 A call.  
 Shake hands  
 And shoot  
 Rubber bands.  
 When candy is offered  
 They take enough.  
 They fill my pockets  
 With wonderful stuff,  
 And they always tell me  
 Smooth from rough.  
 They follow rivers  
 On a map,  
 They double over  
 When I rap,  
 They smack together  
 When I clap.  
 They button buttons,  
 Tie shoelaces,  
 Open doors to  
 Brand-new places.  
 They shape and float  
 My paper ships,  
 Fasten papers to  
 Paper clips,  
 And carry ice cream  
 To my lips. . .

*Mary O'Neill*

## When I Was Lost

Underneath my belt  
 My stomach was a stone.  
 Sinking was the way I felt.  
 And hollow.  
 And Alone.

*Dorothy Aldis*



## Keziah

I have a secret place to go.  
 Not anyone may know.

And sometimes when the wind is rough  
 I cannot get there fast enough.

And sometimes when my mother  
 Is scolding my big brother,

My secret place, it seems to me,  
 Is quite the only place to be.

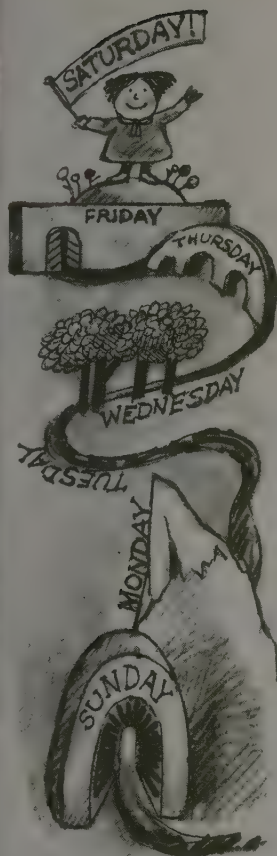
*Gwendolyn Brooks*

## Just Me

Nobody sees what I can see,  
 For back of my eyes there is only me.  
 And nobody knows how my thoughts begin,  
 For there's only myself inside my skin.  
 Isn't it strange how everyone owns  
 Just enough skin to cover his bones?  
 My father's would be too big to fit—  
 I'd be all wrinkled inside of it.  
 And my baby brother's is much too small—  
 It just wouldn't cover me up at all.  
 But I feel just right in the skin I wear,  
 And there's nobody like me anywhere.

*Margaret Hillert*





## If No One Ever Marries Me

If no one ever marries me—  
And I don't see why they should;  
For nurse says I'm not pretty,  
And I'm seldom very good—

If no one ever marries me  
I shan't mind very much;  
I shall buy a squirrel in a cage,  
And a little rabbit hutch.

I shall have a cottage near a wood,  
And a pony all my own.  
And a little lamb quite clean and tame  
That I can take to town.

And when I'm getting really old,  
At twenty-eight or nine,  
I shall buy a little orphan girl  
And bring her up as mine.

*Laurence Alma-Tadema*

## How to Get There

I go  
through Sunday's tunnel, hushed and deep;  
up Monday's mountain, craggy and steep;  
along Tuesday's trail, winding and slow;  
into Wednesday's woods, still halfway to go;  
over Thursday's bridge, shaky and tall;  
through the hidden gate in Friday's wall  
to get to  
SATURDAY.

I wish there were a shorter way.

*Bonnie Nims*

## A Wolf . . .

A wolf  
I considered myself  
but  
the owls are hooting  
and  
the night I fear.

*Osage Indian*



## Sulk

I scuff  
my feet along  
And puff  
my lower lip  
I sip my milk  
in slurps  
And huff  
And frown  
And stamp around  
And tip my chair  
back from the table  
Nearly fall down  
but I don't care

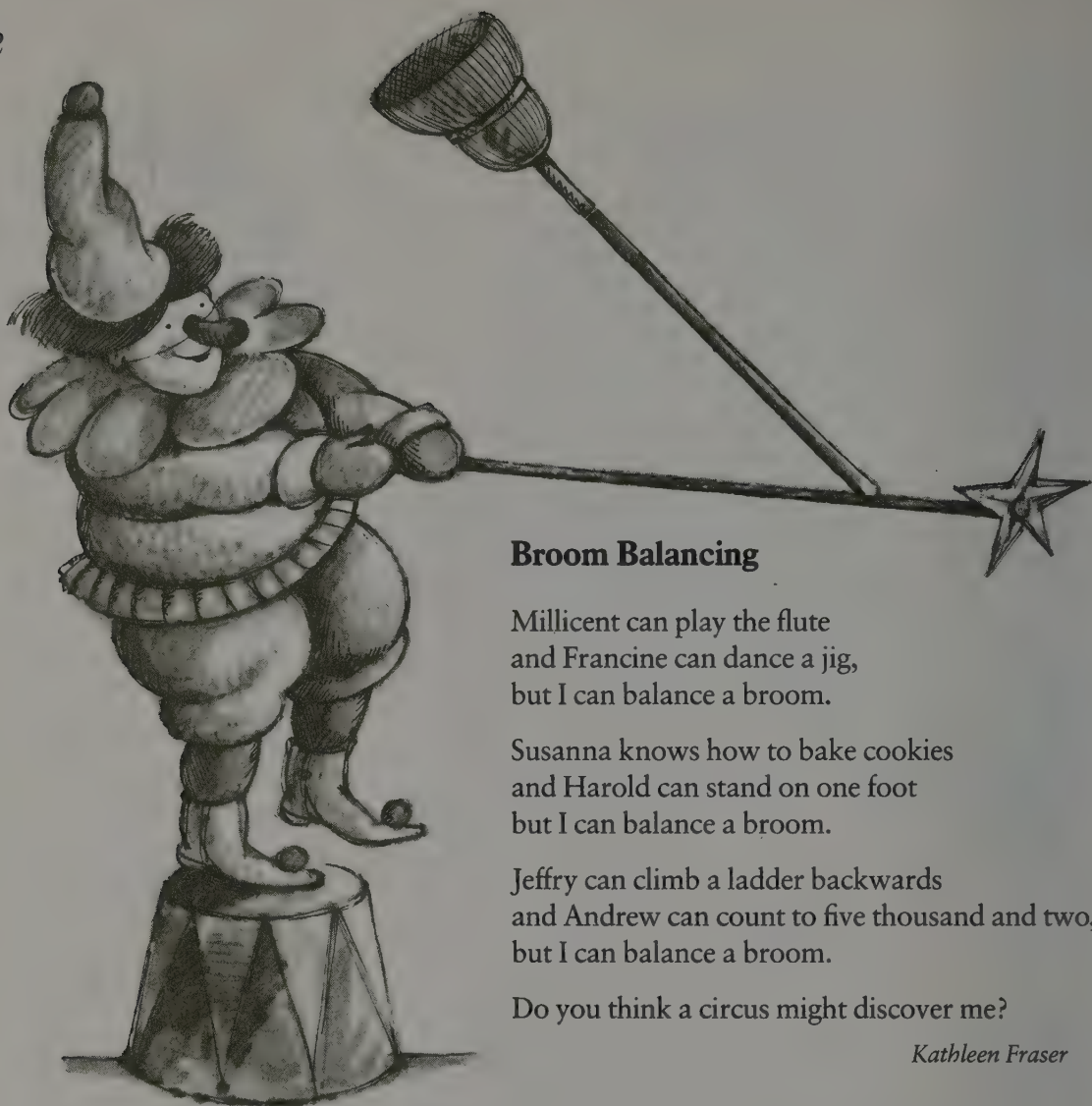
I scuff  
And puff  
And frown  
And huff  
And stamp  
And pout  
Till I forget  
What it's about

*Felice Holman*

## Dust of Snow

The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree  
Has given my heart  
A change of mood,  
And saved some part  
of a day I rued.

*Robert Frost*



### Broom Balancing

Millicent can play the flute  
and Francine can dance a jig,  
but I can balance a broom.

Susanna knows how to bake cookies  
and Harold can stand on one foot  
but I can balance a broom.

Jeffrey can climb a ladder backwards  
and Andrew can count to five thousand and two,  
but I can balance a broom.

Do you think a circus might discover me?

*Kathleen Fraser*

### About Feet

The centipede is not complete  
Unless he has one hundred feet.  
Spiders must have eight for speed,  
And six is what all insects need.  
Other creatures by the score  
Cannot do with less than four.  
But two are quite enough, you know,  
To take me where I want to go.

*Margaret Hillert*



### The Sidewalk Racer

OR

ON THE SKATEBOARD

Skimming  
an asphalt sea  
I swerve, I curve, I  
sway; I speed to whirring  
sound an inch above the  
ground; I'm the sailor  
and the sail, I'm the  
driver and the wheel  
I'm the one and only  
single engine  
human auto  
mobile.

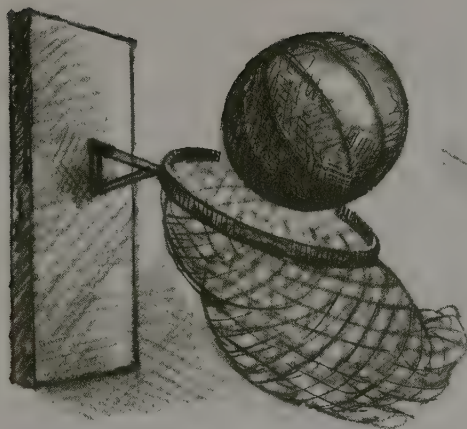
*Lillian Morrison*



## Basketball Star

When I get big  
I want to be the best  
basketball player in the world.  
I'll make jumpshots, hookballs  
and layups  
and talk about dribble—  
mine'll be outta sight!

*Karama Fufuka*



## basketball

when spanky goes  
to the playground all the big boys say  
hey big time—what's happenin'  
'cause his big brother plays basketball for their high school  
and he gives them the power sign and says

you got it  
but when i go and say  
what's the word  
they just say  
your nose is running junior

one day i'll be seven feet tall  
even if i never get a big brother  
and i'll stuff that sweaty ball down  
their laughing throats

*Nikki Giovanni*

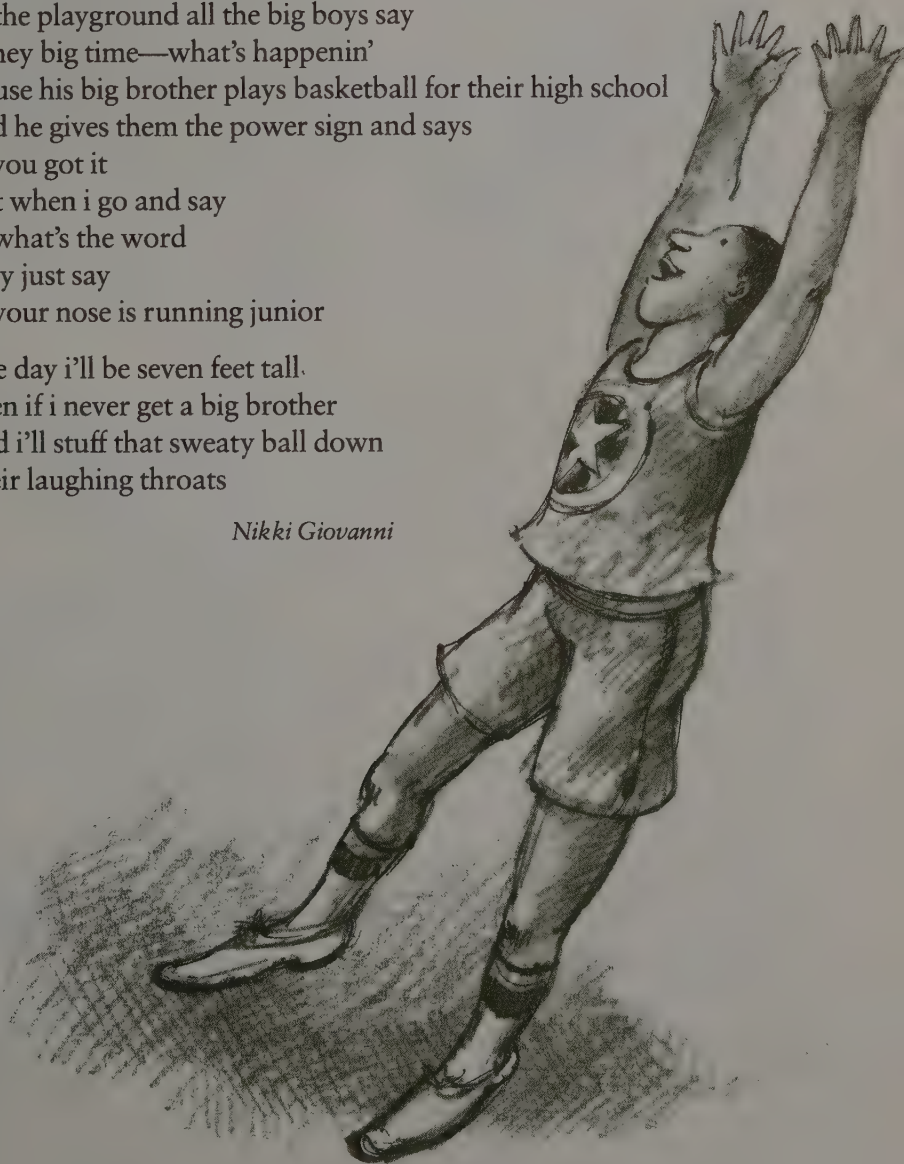
## I Can Fly

I can fly, of course,  
Very low,  
Not fast,  
Rather slow.  
I spread my arms  
Like wings,  
Lean on the wind,  
And my body zings  
About.

Nothing showy—  
A few loops  
And turns—  
But for the most  
Part,  
I just coast.

However,  
Since people are prone  
To talk about  
It,  
I generally prefer,  
Unless I am alone,  
Just to walk about.

*Felice Holman*





## Song

I'd much rather sit there in the sun  
 watching the snow drip from the trees  
 and the milkman's footsteps fill up with water  
 and the shadow of the spruce tree branches waving  
 over the sparkle on the leftover snow  
 and the water dripping in front of my eyes  
 and the water dripping from the roof  
 from the bushes of sparkle the water is dripping  
 the water is dripping from my eyes it is not dripping  
 I'd much rather sit in the sun the sun  
 I'd much rather sit in the sun  
 listening to the shovels scraping  
 and the birds that whistle on the wires that are dripping  
 and the backporch is shining  
 the steam is floating up  
 the steam floats up around me like my breathing was before  
 and the maple tree is gleaming in the branches that are bare  
 above the backporch that is steaming  
 and I take off my shoes  
 I take off my stockings and  
 I sit in the sun I am sitting in the sun  
 I'd much rather sit here in the sun

*Ruth Krauss*

## Growing Up

When I was seven  
 We went for a picnic  
 Up to a magic  
 Foresty place.  
 I knew there were tigers  
 Behind every boulder,  
 Though I didn't meet one  
 Face to face.



When I was older  
 We went for a picnic  
 Up to the very same  
 Place as before,  
 And all of the trees  
 And the rocks were so little  
 They couldn't hide tigers  
 Or *me* anymore.



*Harry Behn*



## Stupid Old Myself

Stupid old myself today  
Found a four-leaf clover,  
Left it where it blew away,  
All my good luck's over.  
Done and finished, gone astray  
Stupid old myself today.

Stupid with a brand-new kite  
Lost it in a tree  
Way up high and tangled tight—  
No more kite for me.

Stupid falling off a log  
When I tried to get  
Close enough to catch a frog  
Came home very wet.

Then I swapped my teddy bear  
In a stupid muddle  
For a doll that's lost her hair.  
No more bear to cuddle.

Walking slowly and alone  
Stupid and in sorrow  
I just found a lucky stone—  
Maybe I'll be smart tomorrow.  
With today one day behind me  
Maybe my good luck will find me.

*Russell Hoban*



## Everybody Says

Everybody says  
I look just like my mother.  
Everybody says  
I'm the image of Aunt Bee.  
Everybody says  
My nose is like my father's  
But *I* want to look like *ME*!

*Dorothy Aldis*



## The Marrog

My desk's at the back of the class  
And nobody, nobody knows  
I'm a Marrog from Mars  
With a body of brass  
And seventeen fingers and toes.

Wouldn't they shriek if they knew  
I've three eyes at the back of my head  
And my hair is bright purple  
My nose is deep blue  
And my teeth are half-yellow, half-red.

My five arms are silver, and spiked  
With knives on them sharper than spears.  
I could go back right now if I liked—  
And return in a million light-years.

I could gobble them all  
For I'm seven foot tall  
And I'm breathing green flames from my ears.

Wouldn't they yell if they knew,  
If they guessed that a Marrog was here?  
Ha-ha, they haven't a clue—  
Or wouldn't they tremble with fear!  
“Look, look, a Marrog”  
They'd all scream—and SMACK  
The blackboard would fall and the ceiling would crack  
And teacher would faint, I suppose.  
But I grin to myself, sitting right at the back  
And nobody, nobody knows.

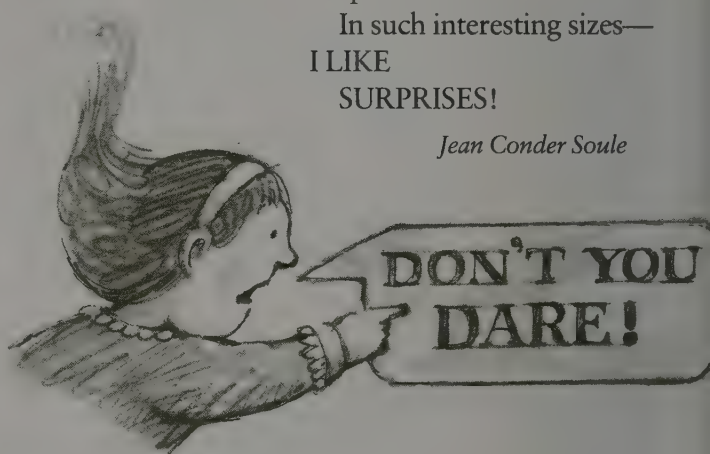
*R. C. Scriven*



## Don't Tell Me That I Talk Too Much!

Don't tell me that I talk too much!  
 Don't say it!  
 Don't you dare!  
 I only say important things  
 Like why it's raining where.  
 Or when or how or why or what  
 Might happen here or there.  
 And why a thing is this or that  
 And who is bound to care.  
 So don't tell me I talk too much!  
 Don't say it!  
**DON'T YOU DARE!**

*Arnold Spilka*



## Surprises

Surprises are round  
 Or long and tallish.  
 Surprises are square  
 Or flat and smallish.  
 Surprises are wrapped  
 With paper and bow,  
 And hidden in closets  
 Where secrets won't show.  
 Surprises are often  
 Good things to eat;  
 A get-well toy or  
 A birthday treat.  
 Surprises come  
 In such interesting sizes—  
**I LIKE**  
**SURPRISES!**

*Jean Conder Soule*

## If We Didn't Have Birthdays

If we didn't have birthdays, you wouldn't be you.  
 If you'd never been born, well then what would you do?  
 If you'd never been born, well then what would you be?  
 You *might* be a fish! Or a toad in a tree!  
 You might be a doorknob! Or three baked potatoes!  
 You might be a bag full of hard green tomatoes.  
 Or worse than all that . . . Why, you might be a **WASN'T!**  
 A Wasn't has no fun at all. No, he doesn't.  
 A Wasn't just isn't. He just isn't present.  
 But you . . . You **ARE YOU!** And, now isn't that pleasant!

*Dr. Seuss*





## History

And I'm thinking how to get out  
Of this stuffy room  
With its big blackboards.

And I'm trying not to listen  
In this boring room  
To the way things *were*.

And I'm thinking about later,  
Running from the room  
Back into the world,

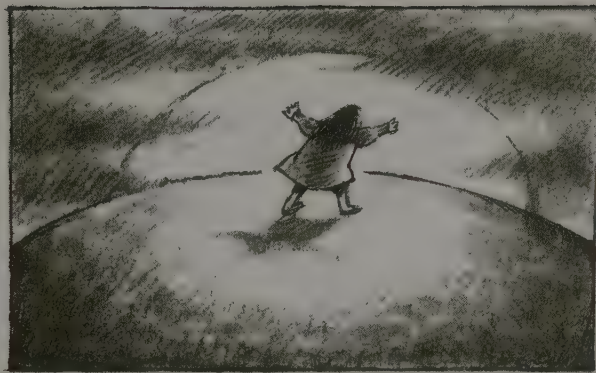
And what the guys will say when  
I'm up to bat and hit  
A big fat home run.

*Myra Cohn Livingston*

## I'm Really Not Lazy

I'm really not lazy—  
I'm not!  
I'm not!  
It's just that I'm thinking  
And thinking  
And thinking  
A lot!  
It's true I don't work  
But I can't!  
I just can't!  
When I'm thinking  
And thinking  
And thinking  
A lot!

*Arnold Spilka*

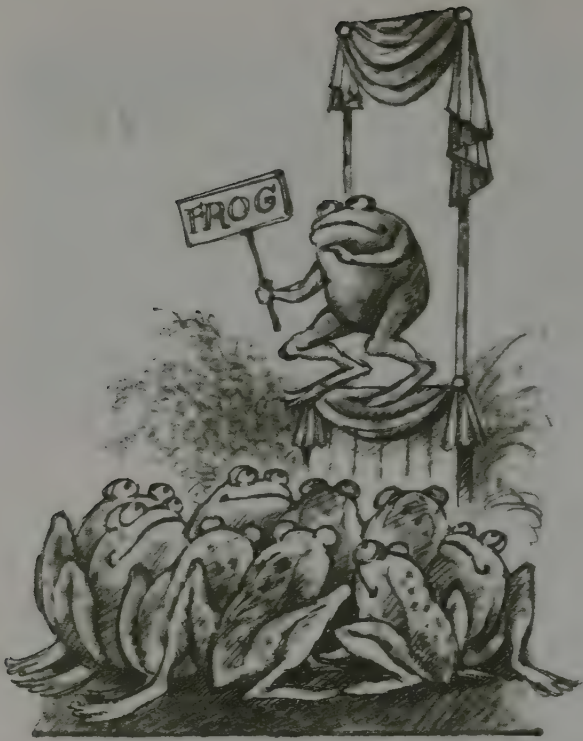


## I Am Cherry Alive

"I am cherry alive," the little girl sang,  
"Each morning I am something new:  
I am apple, I am plum, I am just as excited  
As the boys who made the Hallowe'en bang:  
I am tree, I am cat, I am blossom too:  
When I like, if I like, I can be someone new,  
Someone very old, a witch in a zoo:  
I can be someone else whenever I think who,  
And I want to be everything sometimes too:  
And the peach has a pit and I know that too,  
And I put it in along with everything  
To make the grown-ups laugh whenever I sing:  
And I sing: *It is true; It is untrue;*  
I know, I know, the true is untrue,  
The peach has a pit,  
The pit has a peach:  
And both may be wrong  
When I sing my song,  
But I don't tell the grown-ups: because it is sad,  
And I want them to laugh just like I do  
Because they grew up  
And forgot what they knew  
And they are sure  
I will forget it some day too.  
They are wrong. They are wrong.  
When I sang my song, I knew, I knew!  
I am red, I am gold,  
I am green, I am blue,  
I will always be me,  
I will always be new!"

*Delmore Schwartz*





### I'm Nobody! Who Are You?

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody, too?  
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!  
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!  
How public, like a frog,  
To tell your name the livelong day  
To an admiring bog!

*Emily Dickinson*



### Winter Clothes

Under my hood I have a hat  
And under that  
My hair is flat.  
Under my coat  
My sweater's blue.  
My sweater's red.  
I'm wearing two.  
My muffler muffles to my chin  
And round my neck  
And then tucks in.  
My gloves were knitted  
By my aunts.  
I've mittens too  
And pants  
And pants  
And boots  
And shoes  
With socks inside.  
The boots are rubber, red and wide.  
And when I walk  
I must not fall  
Because I can't get up at all.

*Karla Kuskin*

### Yawning

Sometimes—I'm sorry—but sometimes,  
Sometimes, yes, sometimes I'm bored.  
It may be because I'm an idiot;  
It may be because I'm floored;

It may be because it is raining,  
It may be because it is hot,  
It may be because I have eaten  
Too much, or because I have not.

But sometimes I *cannot* help yawning  
(I'm sorry!) the whole morning through—  
And when Teacher's turning her back on us,  
It may be that she's yawning too.

*Eleanor Farjeon*





## Rhinos Purple, Hippos Green

My sister says  
I shouldn't color  
Rhinos purple,  
Hippos green.  
She says  
I shouldn't be so stupid;  
Those are things  
She's never seen.  
But I don't care  
What my sister says,  
I don't care  
What my sister's seen.  
I will color  
What I want to—  
Rhinos purple,  
Hippos green.

*Michael Patrick Hearn*

## One Day When We Went Walking

One day when we went walking,  
I found a dragon's tooth,  
A dreadful dragon's tooth.  
"A locust thorn," said Ruth.

One day when we went walking,  
I found a brownie's shoe,  
A brownie's button shoe.  
"A dry pea pod," said Sue.

One day when we went walking,  
I found a mermaid's fan,  
A merry mermaid's fan.  
"A scallop shell," said Dan.

One day when we went walking,  
I found a fairy's dress,  
A fairy's flannel dress.  
"A mullein leaf," said Bess.

Next time that I go walking—  
Unless I meet an elf,  
A funny, friendly elf—  
I'm going by myself!

*Valine Hobbs*







# HOME! YOU'RE WHERE IT'S WARM INSIDE

*Home! You are a special place;  
you're where I wake and wash my face,  
brush my teeth and comb my hair,  
change my socks and underwear,  
clean my ears and blow my nose,  
try on all my parents' clothes.*

*Home! You're where it's warm inside,  
where my tears are gently dried,  
where I'm comforted and fed,  
where I'm forced to go to bed,  
where there's always love to spare;  
Home! I'm glad that you are there.*



## The Wrong Start

I got up this morning and meant to be good,  
But things didn't happen the way that they should.

I lost my toothbrush,  
I slammed the door,  
I dropped an egg  
On the kitchen floor,  
I spilled some sugar  
And after that  
I tried to hurry  
And tripped on the cat.

Things may get better. I don't know when.  
I think I'll go back and start over again.

*Marchette Chute*



## Mother's Nerves

My mother said, "If just once more  
I hear you slam that old screen door,  
I'll tear out my hair! I'll dive in the stove!"  
I gave it a bang and in she dove.

*X. J. Kennedy*



## John

John could take his clothes off  
but could not put them on.

His patient mother dressed him,  
and said to little John,

"Now, John! You keep your things on  
But John had long since gone—

and left a trail of sneakers  
and small things in the sun,

so she would know to find him  
wherever he might run.

And at the end of every trail  
stood Mrs. Jones & Son,

she with all his little clothes,  
and little John—with none!

For John could take his clothes off  
but could not put them on.

His patient mother dressed him  
and on went little John—  
and on—

and on—

and on—

*N. M. Bodecker*





## Mother Doesn't Want a Dog

Mother doesn't want a dog.  
 Mother says they smell,  
 And never sit when you say sit,  
 Or even when you yell.  
 And when you come home late at night  
 And there is ice and snow,  
 You have to go back out because  
 The dumb dog has to go.

Mother doesn't want a dog.  
 Mother says they shed,  
 And always let the strangers in  
 And bark at friends instead,  
 And do disgraceful things on rugs,  
 And track mud on the floor,  
 And flop upon your bed at night  
 And snore their doggy snore.

Mother doesn't want a dog.  
 She's making a mistake.  
 Because, more than a dog, I think  
 She will not want this snake.

*Judith Viorst*



## Amelia Mixed the Mustard

Amelia mixed the mustard,  
 She mixed it good and thick;  
 She put it in the custard  
 And made her Mother sick,  
 And showing satisfaction  
 By many a loud huzza  
 "Observe," said she, "the action  
 Of mustard on Mamma."

*A. E. Housman*

## Waking

My secret way of waking  
 is like a place  
 to hide.

I'm very still,  
 my eyes are shut.  
 They all think I am sleeping  
 but  
 I'm wide awake inside.

They all think I am sleeping  
 but  
 I'm wiggling my toes.  
 I feel sun-fingers  
 on my cheek.  
 I hear voices whisper-speak.  
 I squeeze my eyes  
 to keep them shut  
 so they will think I'm sleeping  
 BUT  
 I'm really wide awake inside  
 —and no one knows!

*Lilian Moore*





## I Wish I Could Meet the Man That Knows

I wish I could meet the man that knows  
 Who put the fly on my daddy's nose  
 When my daddy was taking a nap today.  
 I tried to slap that fly away  
 So Daddy could sleep. But just as my hand  
 Came down to slap him, the fly jumped, AND

I hit with a bang—where do you suppose?—  
**SMACK ON THE END OF DADDY'S  
 NOSE!**

“Ow!” cried Daddy, and up he jumped.  
 He jumped so hard that he **THUMP-  
 BUMPED**

His head on the wall.

Well, I tried to say,  
 “See, Daddy, I slapped the fly away.”  
 And I should think he would have thanked me.  
 But what do you think he did? He  
**SPANKED** me!

“I was just trying to help!” I said.  
 But Daddy was looking very red.  
 “For trying to help, I have to thank you.  
 But for that smack on the nose, I’ll spank  
 you!”

And up in the air went his great big hand  
 As he said, “I hope you understand  
 It’s my nose I’m spanking for, not the fly.  
 For the fly I thank you.”

And that is why  
 I wish I could meet the man that knows  
 Who put the fly on my daddy’s nose.  
 For when I find him, I want to thank him.  
 And as I do, I want to spank him.

*John Ciardi*





## Some Things Don't Make Any Sense at All

My mom says I'm her sugarplum.  
 My mom says I'm her lamb.  
 My mom says I'm completely perfect  
 Just the way I am.  
 My mom says I'm a super-special wonderful terrific  
     little guy.  
 My mom just had another baby.  
 Why?

*Judith Viorst*



## The First Tooth

Through the house what busy joy,  
 Just because the infant boy  
 Has a tiny tooth to show!  
 I have got a double row,  
 All as white, and all as small;  
 Yet no one cares for mine at all.  
 He can say but half a word,  
 Yet that single sound's preferred  
 To all the words that I can say  
 In the longest summer day.  
 He cannot walk, yet if he put  
 With mimic motion out his foot,  
 As if he thought he were advancing,  
 It's prized more than my best dancing.

*Charles and Mary Lamb*



## Bringing Up Babies

If babies could speak they'd tell mother or nurse  
 That slapping was pointless, and why:  
 For if you're not crying it prompts you to cry,  
 And if you are—then you cry worse.

*Roy Fuller*



## Six Weeks Old

He is so small, he does not know  
 The summer sun, the winter snow;  
 The spring that ebbs and comes again,  
 All this is far beyond his ken.

A little world he feels and sees:  
 His mother's arms, his mother's knees;  
 He hides his face against her breast,  
 And does not care to learn the rest.

*Christopher Morley*



## Help!

Firemen, firemen!  
State police!  
Victor's locked in Pop's valise!  
Robert's eating kitty litter!  
Doctor!

Lawyer!

Baby-sitter!

*X. J. Kennedy*

## Lil' Bro'

I have to take my little brother  
everywhere I go  
'cause I'm his big sister  
and Mama told me to.

His nose is always snotty  
and his shoes come all untied,  
his diapers get wet and dirty,  
and he sure does like to cry.

He gets in the dirt  
and runs in the street  
and doesn't like to mind—  
but he's my little brother  
and I keep him all the time.

*Karama Fufuka*



## My Brother

My brother's worth about two cents,  
As far as I can see,  
I simply cannot understand  
Why they would want a "he."

He spends a good part of his day  
Asleep inside the crib,  
And when he eats, he has to wear  
A stupid baby bib.

He cannot walk and cannot talk  
And cannot throw a ball.  
In fact, he can't do anything—  
He's just no fun at all.

It would have been more sensible,  
As far as I can see,  
Instead of getting one like him  
To get one just like me.

*Marci Ridlon*



## Leave Me Alone

Loving care!  
Too much to bear.  
*Leave me alone!*

Don't brush my hair,  
Don't pat my head,  
Don't tuck me in  
Tonight in bed,  
Don't ask me if I want a sweet,  
Don't fix my favorite things to eat,  
Don't give me lots of good advice,  
And most of all just don't be nice.

But when I've wallowed well in sorrow,  
Be nice to me again tomorrow.

*Felice Holman*



## The Myra Song

Myra, Myra, sing-song.

Myra, Myra, gay.

Myra, Myra, skip-along

Sings all day.

Myra, Myra, gloom-pout.

Myra, Myra, sad.

Myra, Myra, poke-about,

Don't feel bad.

Myra, Myra, chatterbox.

Myra, Myra, busy.

What a clatter Myra talks!

Makes me dizzy!

Myra, Myra, la-de-da,

Dressed in Mummy's clothes,

Playing Lady Fa-la-la,

Looking down her nose.

Myra, Myra, sleepyhead.

Myra, Myra, tiny.

Myra, Myra, slugabed.

The nose I kiss is shiny.

Gay-sad-twinkle-star

Big-Myra-small.

What a *lot* of her there are!

I love them all.

*John Ciardi*

## Let Others Share

Let others share your toys, my son,

Do not insist on *all* the fun.

For if you do it's certain that

You'll grow to be an adult brat.

*Edward Anthony*

## In the Motel

Bouncing! bouncing! on the beds

My brother Bob and I cracked heads—

People next door heard the crack,

Whammed on the wall, so we whammed right back.

Dad's razor caused an overload

And wow! did the TV set explode!

Someone's car backed fast and—tinkle!

In our windshield was a wrinkle.

Eight more days on the road? Hooray!

What a bang-up holiday!

*X. J. Kennedy*

## Rules

Do not jump on ancient uncles.

\*

Do not yell at average mice.

\*

Do not wear a broom to breakfast.

\*

Do not ask a snake's advice.

\*

Do not bathe in chocolate pudding.

\*

Do not talk to bearded bears.

\*

Do not smoke cigars on sofas.

\*

Do not dance on velvet chairs.

\*

Do not take a whale to visit

Russell's mother's cousin's yacht.

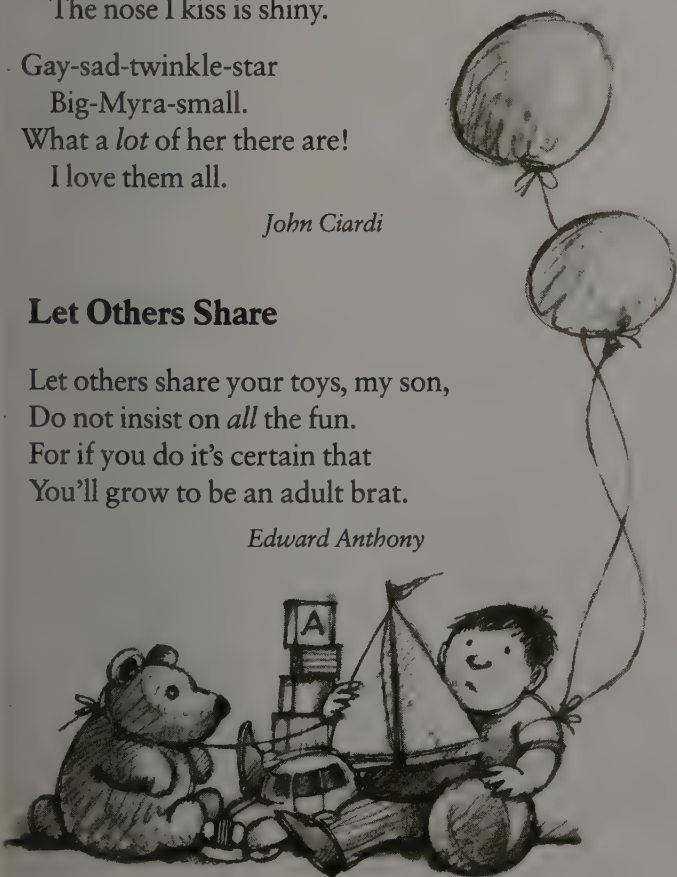
\*

And whatever else you do do

It is better you

Do not.

*Karla Kuskin*



## The Runaway

I made peanut butter sandwiches.  
I didn't leave a mess.  
I packed my shell collection  
and my velvet party dress,  
the locket Grandma gave me  
and two pairs of extra socks,  
my brother's boy scout flashlight  
and some magic wishing rocks.

Oh, they'll be so sorry.  
Oh, they'll be so sad,  
when they start to realize  
what a nifty kid they had.

I'd really like to be here  
when they wring their hands and say,  
"We drove the poor child to it.  
She finally ran away."

If I peeked through the window  
I'd see them dressed in black,  
and hear them sob and softly sigh,  
"Come back, dear child! Come back!"

The house will be so quiet.  
My room will be so clean.  
And they'll be oh so sorry  
that they were oh so mean!

*Bobbi Katz*



## Soap

Just look at those hands!  
Did you actually think  
That the dirt would come off, my daughter,  
By wiggling your fingers  
Around in the sink  
And slapping the top of the water?

Just look at your face!  
Did you really suppose  
Those smudges would all disappear  
With a dab at your chin  
And the tip of your nose  
And a rub on the back of one ear?

You tell me your face  
And your fingers are *clean*?  
Do you think your old Dad is a dope?  
Let's try it again  
With a different routine.  
This time we'll make use of the soap!

*Martin Gardner*



## They're Calling

They're calling, "Nan,  
Come at once."

But I don't answer.

It's not that I don't hear,

I'm very sharp of ear,

But I'm not Nan,

I'm a dancer.

They're calling, "Nan,  
Go and wash."

But I don't go yet.

Their voices are quite clear,

I'm humming but I hear,

But I'm not Nan,

I'm a poet.

They're calling, "Nan,  
Come to dinner!"

And I stop humming.

I seem to hear them clearer,

Now that dinner's nearer.

Well, just for now I'm Nan,

And I say, "Coming."

*Felice Holman*

## What Someone Said When He Was Spanked on the Day Before His Birthday

Some day

I may

Pack my bag and run away.

Some day

I may.

—But not today.

Some night

I might

Slip away in the moonlight.

I might.

*Some* night.

—But not tonight.

Some night.

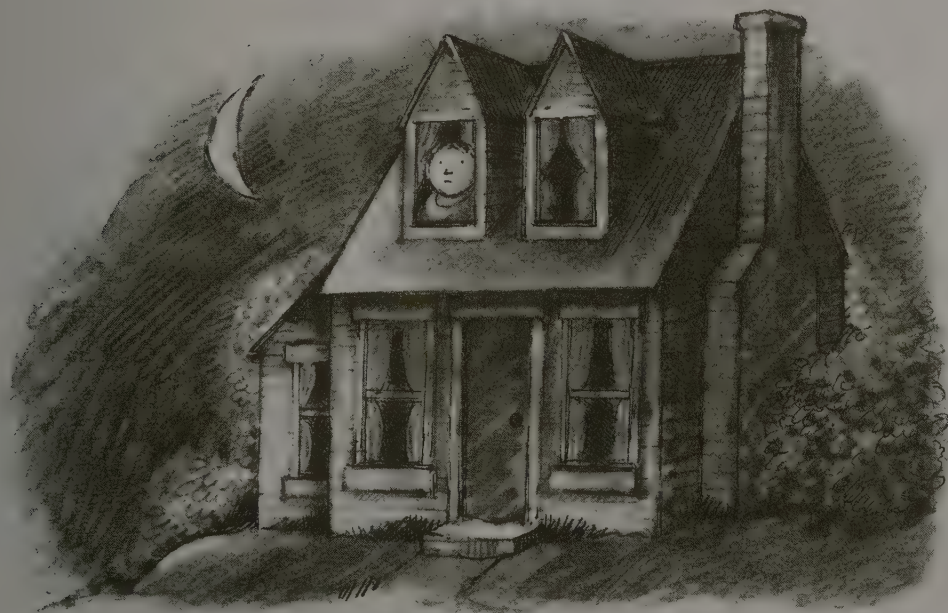
Some day.

I might.

I may.

—But right now I think I'll stay.

*John Ciardi*





## Going Up

Space-Suit Sammy,  
Head in glass,  
Watches all  
The Martians pass.

Ray gun ready,  
Tank in tow,  
Rocket waiting—  
Systems go!

*Whish!* by moon,  
Over stars,  
Past the glint  
Of alien cars,

Space-Suit Sammy  
At the helm  
Knows atomic  
Void and realm,

Knows the course,  
The way ahead,  
Up and up—  
*And so to bed.*

John Travers Moore



## Up in the Pine

I'm by myself  
I want to be  
I don't want anyone  
Playing with me

I'm all alone  
In the top of the pine  
Daddy spanked me  
And I don't feel fine

I can look way out  
On the woods and lakes  
I can hear the buzz  
That the chain saw makes

And a woodpecker chopping  
In the crabapple tree  
With his red crest bobbing  
But he doesn't see me

If anybody hollers  
I'll pretend I'm not there  
I may miss dinner  
But I don't care

The pine needles swish  
And the wind whistles free  
And up in the pine  
Is only me

It's starting to rain  
But the tree keeps me dry  
We toss in the black clouds  
The tree and I

Now Daddy's calling.  
He never *stays* mad.  
He probably feels awful  
Because I'm sad.

I'll answer Daddy.  
He's concerned about the weather.  
I'll climb down and he'll take my hand  
And we'll go in the house together.

Nancy Dingman Watson



## Homework

Homework sits on top of Sunday, squashing Sunday flat.  
Homework has the smell of Monday, homework's very fat.  
Heavy books and piles of paper, answers I don't know.  
Sunday evening's almost finished, now I'm going to go  
Do my homework in the kitchen. Maybe just a snack,  
Then I'll sit right down and start as soon as I run back  
For some chocolate sandwich cookies. Then I'll really do  
All that homework in a minute. First I'll see what new  
Show they've got on television in the living room.  
Everybody's laughing there, but misery and gloom  
And a full refrigerator are where I am at.  
I'll just have another sandwich. Homework's very fat.

*Russell Hoban*

## Hot Line

Our daughter, Alicia,  
Had just turned sixteen,  
And was earning the title  
Of "Telephone Queen."

For her birthday we gave her  
Her own private phone  
Along with instructions  
To leave ours alone.

Now we still catch her using  
Our line, with the stall,  
"I can't tie mine up, Mom,  
I might get a call."

*Louella Dunann*

## Homework

What is it about homework  
That makes me want to write  
My Great Aunt Myrt to thank her for  
The sweater that's too tight?

What is it about homework  
That makes me pick up socks  
That stink from days and days of wear,  
Then clean the litter box?

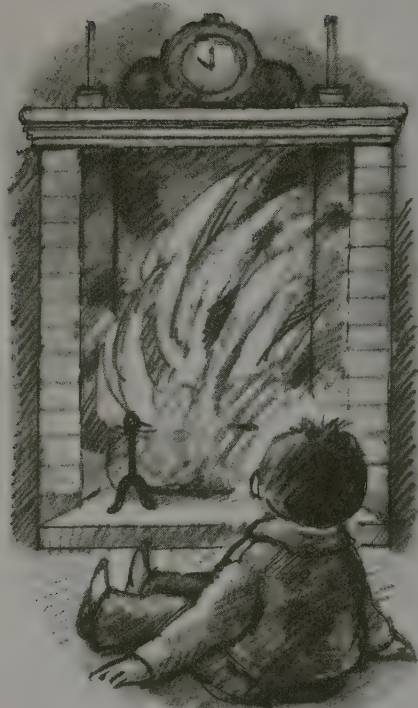
What is it about homework  
That makes me volunteer  
To take the garbage out before  
The bugs and flies appear?

What is it about homework  
That makes me wash my hair  
And take an hour combing out  
The snags and tangles there?

What is it about homework?  
You know, I wish I knew,  
'Cause nights when I've got homework  
I've got much too much to do!

*Jane Yolen*





## The Winning of the TV West

When twilight comes to Prairie Street  
 On every TV channel,  
 The kids watch men with blazing guns  
 In jeans and checkered flannel.  
 Partner, the West is wild tonight—  
 There's going to be a battle  
 Between the sheriff's posse and  
 The gang that stole the cattle.  
 On every screen on Prairie Street  
 The sheriff roars his order:  
 "We've got to head those hombres off  
 Before they reach the border."  
 Clippity-clop and bangity-bang  
 The lead flies left and right.  
 Paradise Valley is freed again  
 Until tomorrow night.  
 And all the kids on Prairie Street  
 Over and under ten  
 Can safely go to dinner now . . .  
 The West is won again.

*John T. Alexander*

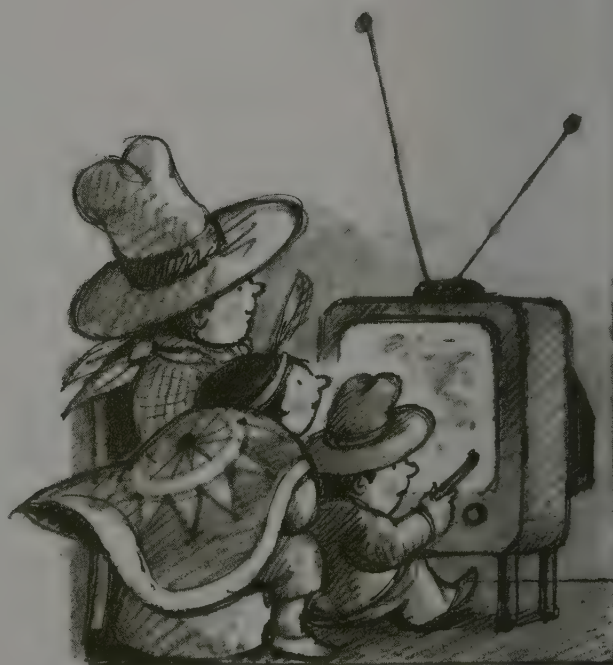
## I'm Alone in the Evening

I'm alone in the evening  
 when the family sits  
 reading and sleeping  
 and I watch the fire in close  
 to see flame goblins  
 wriggling out of their caves  
 for the evening

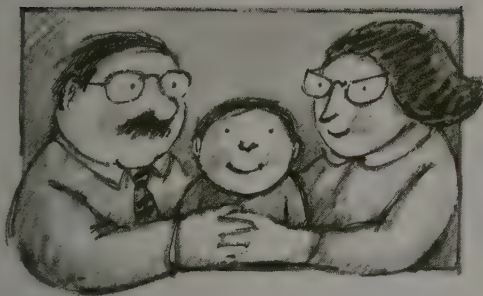
Later I'm alone  
 when the bath has gone cold around me  
 and I have put my foot  
 beneath the cold tap  
 where it can dribble  
 through valleys between my toes  
 out across the white plain of my foot  
 and bibble bibble into the sea

I'm alone  
 when mum's switched out the light  
 my head against the pillow  
 listening to ca thump ca thump  
 in the middle of my ears.  
 It's my heart.

*Michael Rosen*







## The Middle of the Night

This is a song to be sung at night  
 When nothing is left of you and the light  
 When the cats don't bark  
 And the mice don't moo  
 And the nightmares come and nuzzle you  
 When there's blackness in the cupboards  
 And the closet and the hall  
 And a tipping, tapping, rapping  
 In the middle of the wall  
 When the lights have one by one gone out  
 All over everywhere  
 And a shadow by the curtains  
 Bumps a shadow by the chair  
 Then you hide beneath your pillow  
 With your eyes shut very tight  
 And you sing  
 "There's nothing sweeter than  
 The middle of the night.  
 I'm extremely fond of shadows  
 And I really must confess  
 That cats and bats don't scare me.  
 Well, they couldn't scare me less  
 And most of all I like the things  
 That slide and slip and creep."  
 It really is surprising  
 How fast you fall asleep.

*Karla Kuskin*



## Two People

She reads the paper,  
 while he turns on TV;  
 she likes the mountains,  
 he craves the sea.

He'd rather drive,  
 she'll take the plane;  
 he waits for sunshine;  
 she walks in the rain.

He gulps down cold drinks,  
 she sips at hot;  
 he asks, "Why go?"  
 She asks, "Why not?"

In just about everything  
 they disagree,  
 but they love one another  
 and they both love me.

*Eve Merriam*

## Our House

Our house is small—  
 The lawn and all  
 Can scarcely hold the flowers,  
 Yet every bit,  
 The whole of it,  
 Is precious, for it's ours!

From door to door,  
 From roof to floor,  
 From wall to wall we love it;  
 We wouldn't change  
 For something strange  
 One shabby corner of it!

The space complete  
 In cubic feet  
 From cellar floor to rafter  
 Just measures right,  
 And not too tight,  
 For us, and friends, and laughter!

*Dorothy Brown Thompson*

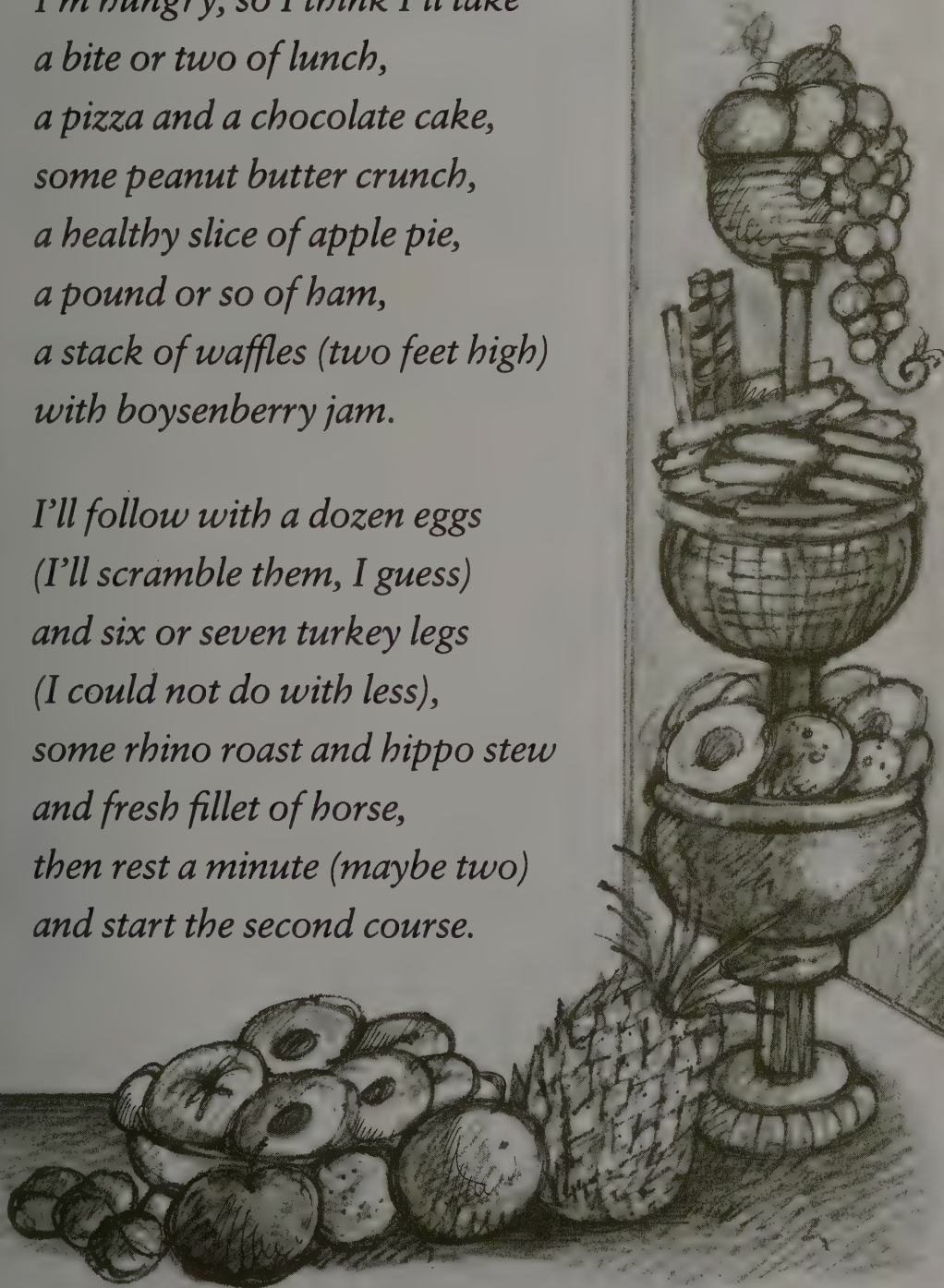




# I'M HUNGRY!

*I'm hungry, so I think I'll take  
a bite or two of lunch,  
a pizza and a chocolate cake,  
some peanut butter crunch,  
a healthy slice of apple pie,  
a pound or so of ham,  
a stack of waffles (two feet high)  
with boysenberry jam.*

*I'll follow with a dozen eggs  
(I'll scramble them, I guess)  
and six or seven turkey legs  
(I could not do with less),  
some rhino roast and hippo stew  
and fresh fillet of horse,  
then rest a minute (maybe two)  
and start the second course.*



## My Mouth

stays shut  
but  
food just  
finds  
a way

my tongue says  
we are  
full today  
but  
teeth just  
grin  
and  
say  
come in  
i am always hungry

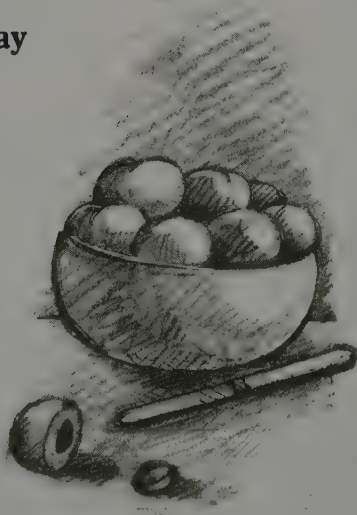
*Arnold Adoff*

## This Is Just to Say

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast

Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold.

*William Carlos Williams*



## Turtle Soup

Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,  
Waiting in a hot tureen !  
Who for such dainties would not stoop ?  
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup !  
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup !  
Beau—ootiful Soo—oop !  
Beau—ootiful Soo—oop !  
Soo—oop of the e—e—evening,  
Beautiful, beautiful Soup !

Beautiful Soup ! Who cares for fish,  
Game, or any other dish ?  
Who would not give all else for two  
pennyworth only of beautiful Soup ?  
Pennyworth only of beautiful Soup ?  
Beau—ootiful Soo—oop !  
Beau—ootiful Soo—oop !  
Soo—oop of the e—e—evening,  
Beautiful, beauti—FUL SOUP !

*Lewis Carroll*

## Tomorrow's the Fair

Tomorrow's the fair,  
And I shall be there,  
Stuffing my guts  
With gingerbread nuts.

*Anonymous*



## Egg Thoughts

### *Soft-Boiled*

I do not like the way you slide,  
I do not like your soft inside,  
I do not like you many ways,  
And I could do for many days  
Without a soft-boiled egg.

### *Sunny-Side-Up*

With their yolks and whites all runny  
They are looking at me funny.

### *Sunny-Side-Down*

Lying face-down on the plate  
On their stomachs there they wait.

### *Poached*

Poached eggs on toast, why do you shiver  
With such a funny little quiver?

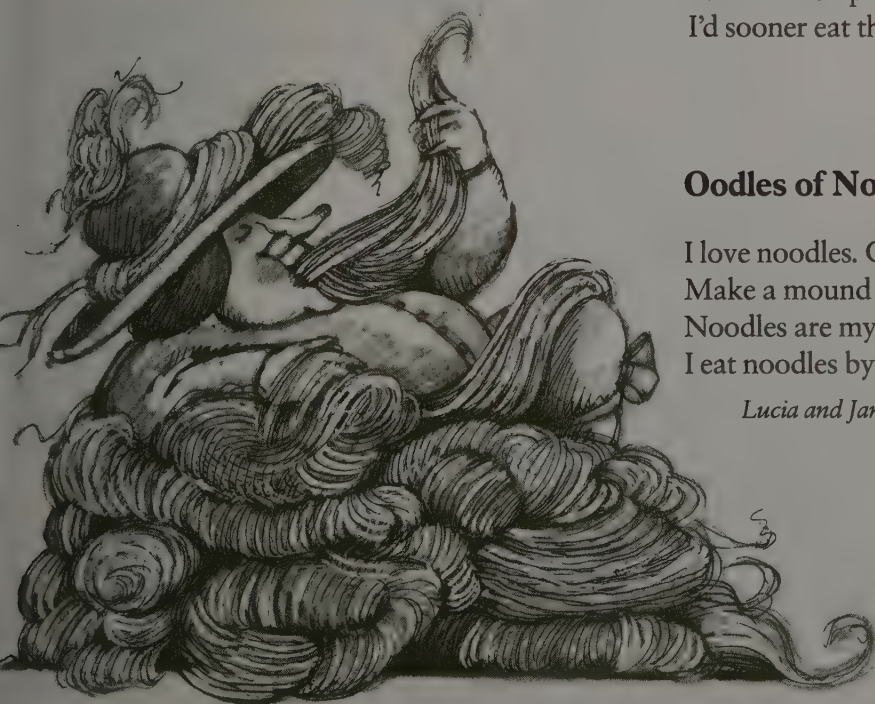
### *Scrambled*

I eat as well as I am able,  
But some falls underneath the table.

### *Hard-Boiled*

With so much suffering today  
Why do them any other way?

*Russell Hoban*



## Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast

Daddy fixed the breakfast.  
He made us each a waffle.  
It looked like gravel pudding.  
It tasted something awful.

“Ha, ha,” he said, “I’ll try again.  
This time I’ll get it right.”  
But what I got was in between  
Bituminous and anthracite.

“A little too well done? Oh well,  
I’ll have to start all over.”  
*That* time what landed on my plate  
Looked like a manhole cover.

I tried to cut it with a fork:  
The fork gave off a spark.  
I tried a knife and twisted it  
Into a question mark.

I tried it with a hack-saw.  
I tried it with a torch.  
It didn’t even make a dent.  
It didn’t even scorch.

The next time Dad gets breakfast  
When Mommy’s sleeping late,  
I think I’ll skip the waffles.  
I’d sooner eat the plate!

*John Ciardi*

## Ooodles of Noodles

I love noodles. Give me ooodles.  
Make a mound up to the sun.  
Noodles are my favorite foodles.  
I eat noodles by the ton.

*Lucia and James L. Hymes, Jr.*

## Taste of Purple

Grapes hang purple  
In their bunches,  
Ready for  
September lunches.  
Gather them, no  
Minutes wasting.  
Purple is  
Delicious tasting.

*Leland B. Jacobs*



## Meg's Egg

Meg  
Likes  
A *regular* egg  
Not a poached  
Or a fried  
But a *regular* egg  
Not a deviled  
Or coddled  
Or scrambled  
Or boiled  
But an *eggular*  
*Megular*  
*Regular*  
Egg!

*Mary Ann Hoberman*

## Pie Problem

If I eat one more piece of pie, I'll die!  
If I can't have one more piece of pie, I'll die!  
So since it's all decided I must die,  
I might as well have one more piece of pie.  
MMMM—OOOH—MY!  
Chomp—Gulp—'Bye.

*Shel Silverstein*

## Celery

Celery, raw,  
Develops the jaw,  
But celery, stewed,  
Is more quietly chewed.

*Ogden Nash*

## Chocolate Cake

Chocolate cake  
chocolate cake  
*that's* the one  
I'll help you make  
Flour soda  
salt are sifted  
butter sugar  
cocoa lifted  
by the eggs  
then mix the whole  
grease the pans  
I'll lick the bowl  
Chocolate caked  
chocolate caked  
*that's* what I'll be  
when it's baked.

*Nina Payne*





## Chocolate Chocolate

ove i  
you so  
i  
want  
to  
narry  
you  
and  
ive  
forever  
in the  
flavor  
of your  
brown

*Arnold Adoff*



## Little Bits of Soft-Boiled Egg

Little bits of soft-boiled egg  
Spread along the table leg  
Annoy a parent even more  
Than toast and jam dropped on the floor.  
(When you're bashing on the ketchup  
Keep in mind where it might fetch up.)  
Try to keep the food you eat  
Off your clothes and off your seat,  
On your plate and fork and knife.  
This holds true throughout your life.

*Fay Maschler*

## Patience

Chocolate Easter bunny  
In a jelly bean nest,  
I'm saving you for very last  
Because I love you best.  
I'll only take a nibble  
From the tip of your ear  
And one bite from the other side  
So that you won't look queer.  
Yum, you're so delicious!  
I didn't mean to eat  
Your chocolate tail till Tuesday.  
Oops! There go your feet!  
I wonder how your back tastes  
With all that chocolate hair.  
I never thought your tummy  
Was only filled with air!  
Chocolate Easter bunny  
In a jelly bean nest,  
I'm saving you for very last  
Because I love you best.

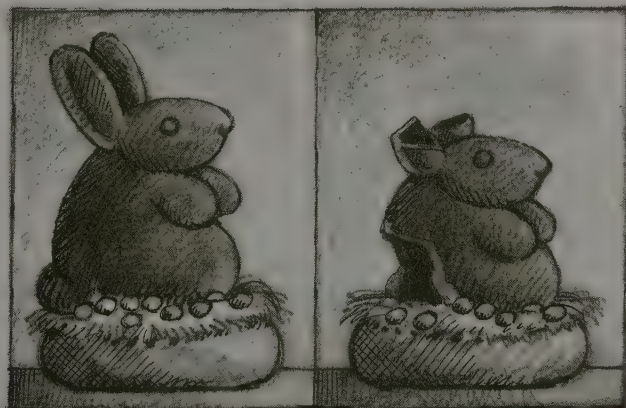
*Bobbi Katz*

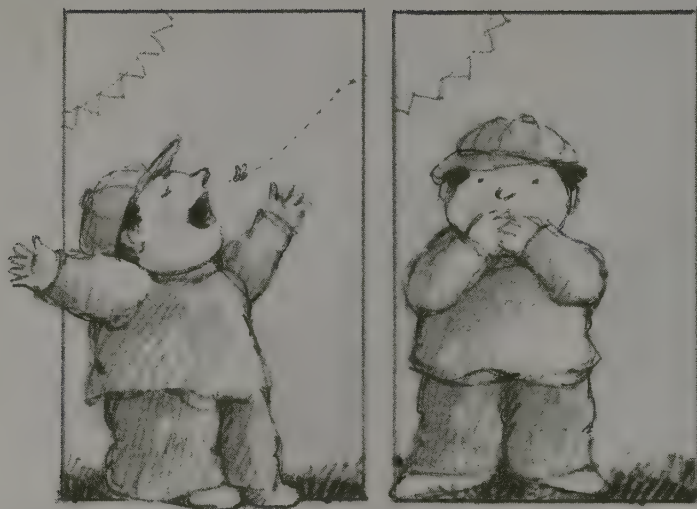


## My Little Sister

My little sister  
Likes to eat.  
But when she does  
She's not too neat.  
The trouble is  
She doesn't know  
Exactly where  
The food should go!

*William Wise*





## Accidentally

Once—I didn't mean to,  
but that  
was that—

I yawned in the sunshine  
and swallowed a gnat.

I'd rather eat mushrooms  
and bullfrogs' legs,  
I'd rather have pepper  
all over my eggs

than open my mouth  
on a sleepy day  
and close on a gnat  
going down that way.

It tasted sort of salty.  
It didn't hurt a bit.

I accidentally ate a gnat  
and that  
was  
it!

*Maxine W. Kumin*

## A Thousand Hairy Savages

A thousand hairy savages  
Sitting down to lunch  
Gobble gobble glup glup  
Munch munch munch.

*Spike Milligan*

## I Eat My Peas with Honey

I eat my peas with honey;  
I've done it all my life.  
It makes the peas taste funny,  
But it keeps them on the knife.

*Anonymous*



## I Raised a Great Hullabaloo

I raised a great hullabaloo  
When I found a large mouse in my stew,  
Said the waiter, "Don't shout  
And wave it about,  
Or the rest will be wanting one, too!"

*Anonymous*







## The Worm

When the earth is turned in spring  
The worms are fat as anything.

And birds come flying all around  
To eat the worms right off the ground.

They like worms just as much as I  
Like bread and milk and apple pie.

And once, when I was very young,  
I put a worm right on my tongue.

I didn't like the taste a bit,  
And so I didn't swallow it.

But oh, it makes my Mother squirm  
Because she *thinks* I ate that worm!

Ralph Bergengren

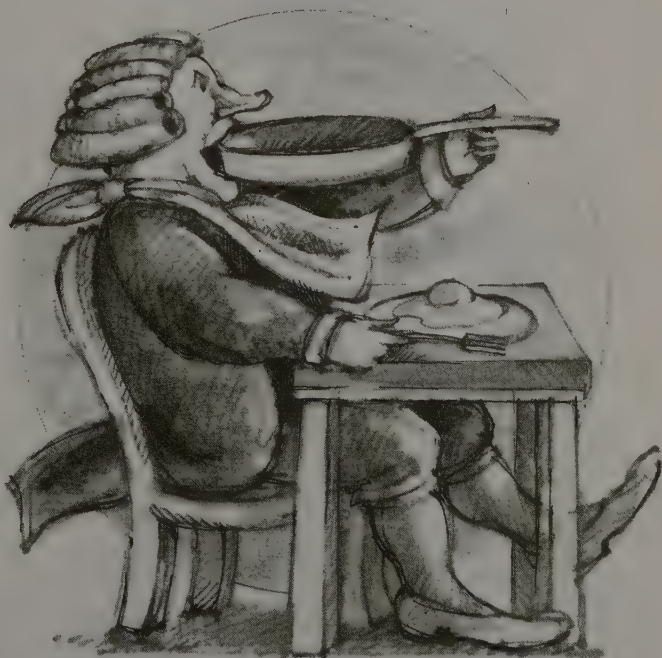
## Twickham Tweer

Shed a tear for Twickham Tweer  
who ate uncommon meals,  
who often peeled bananas  
and then only ate the peels,  
who emptied jars of marmalade  
and only ate the jars,  
and only ate the wrappers  
off of chocolate candy bars.

When Twickham cooked a chicken  
he would only eat the bones,  
he discarded scoops of ice cream  
though he always ate the cones,  
he'd boil a small potato  
but he'd only eat the skin,  
and pass up canned asparagus  
to gobble down the tin.

He sometimes dined on apple cores  
and bags of peanut shells,  
on cottage cheese containers,  
cellophane from caramels,  
but Twickham Tweer passed on last year,  
that odd and novel man,  
when he fried an egg one morning  
and then ate the frying pan.

Jack Prelutsky





### The Pizza

Look at itsy-bitsy Mitzi!  
See her figure slim and ritzy!  
She eatsa  
Pizza!  
Greedy Mitzi!  
She no longer itsy-bitsy!

Ogden Nash

*Soliloquy of a Tortoise  
on Revisiting  
the Lettuce Beds  
After an Interval of One Hour  
While Supposed  
to Be  
Sleeping  
in a Clump  
of Blue Hollyhocks*

One cannot have enough  
of this delicious stuff!

E. V. Rieu



### Mr. Pratt

Mr. Pratt has never left  
A single crumb of bread,  
Which may explain why Mrs. Pratt  
Looks lean and underfed.

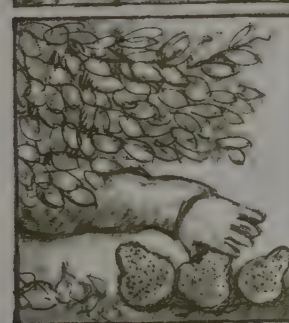
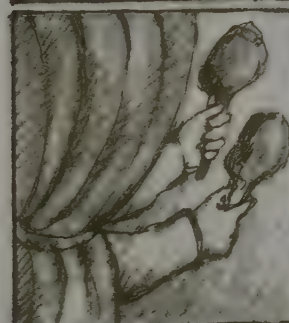
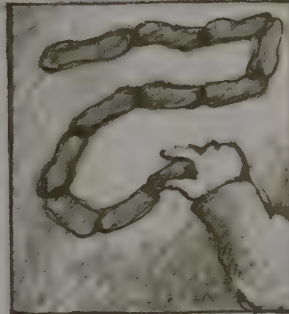
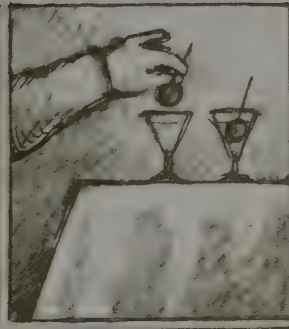
I once asked Mr. Pratt to leave  
His wife a crumb of bread.  
"Do you suggest," he shrieked at me,  
"That I be thin instead?"

"I only thought," I answered true,  
"That were you not so fat,  
There might be room for me to see  
A glimpse of Mrs. Pratt."

Myra Cohn Livingston







## Sneaky Bill

I'm Sneaky Bill, I'm terrible mean and vicious,  
I steal all the cashews

from the mixed-nuts dishes;

I eat all the icing but I won't touch the cake,

And what you won't give me,

I'll go ahead and take.

I gobble up the cherries from everyone's drinks,

And whenever there are sausages

I grab a dozen links;

I take both drumsticks if

there's turkey or chicken,

And the biggest strawberries

are what I'm pickin';

I make sure I get the finest chop on the plate,

And I'll eat the portions of anyone who's late!

I'm always on the spot before the dinner bell—

I guess I'm pretty awful,

but

I

do

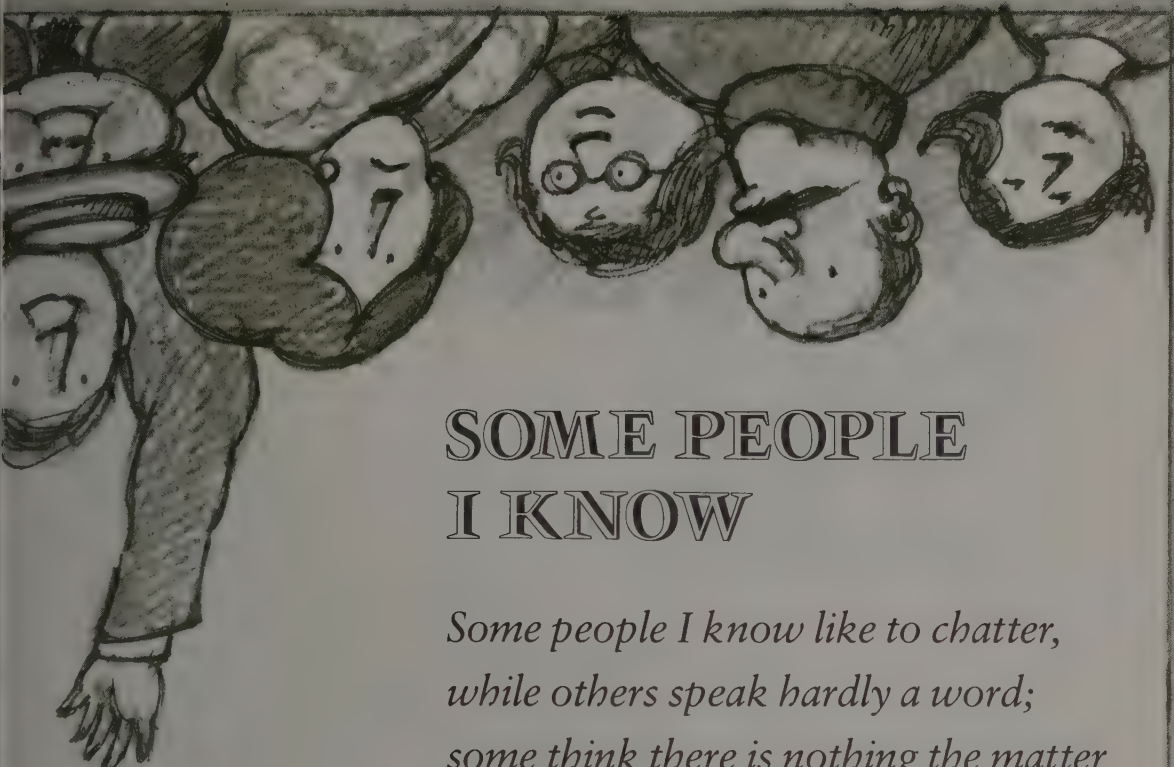
eat

well!

*William Cole*







## SOME PEOPLE I KNOW

*Some people I know like to chatter,  
while others speak hardly a word;  
some think there is nothing the matter  
with being completely absurd;  
some are impossibly serious,  
while others are absolute fun;  
some are reserved and mysterious,  
while others shine bright as the sun.*



*Some people I know appear sour,  
but many seem pleasant and sweet;  
some have the grace of a flower,  
while others trip over their feet;  
some are as still as a steeple,  
while some need to fidget and fuss;  
yet every last one of these people  
is somehow exactly like us.*



## Routine

No matter what we are and who,  
Some duties everyone must do:

A Poet puts aside his wreath  
To wash his face and brush his teeth,

And even Earls  
Must comb their curls,

And even Kings  
Have underthings.

*Arthur Guiterman*

## Some People

Isn't it strange some people make  
You feel so tired inside,  
Your thoughts begin to shrivel up  
Like leaves all brown and dried!

But when you're with some other ones,  
It's stranger still to find  
Your thoughts as thick as fireflies  
All shiny in your mind!

*Rachel Field*



## People

Some people talk and talk  
and never say a thing.  
Some people look at you  
and birds begin to sing.

Some people laugh and laugh  
and yet you want to cry.  
Some people touch your hand  
and music fills the sky.

*Charlotte Zolotow*

## Daddy Fell into the Pond

Everyone grumbled. The sky was gray.  
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.  
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,  
And there seemed to be nothing beyond,

THEN

*Daddy fell into the pond!*

And everyone's face grew merry and bright,  
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.  
"Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!  
He's crawling out of the duckweed." *Click!*

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,  
And doubled up, shaking silently,  
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft  
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.

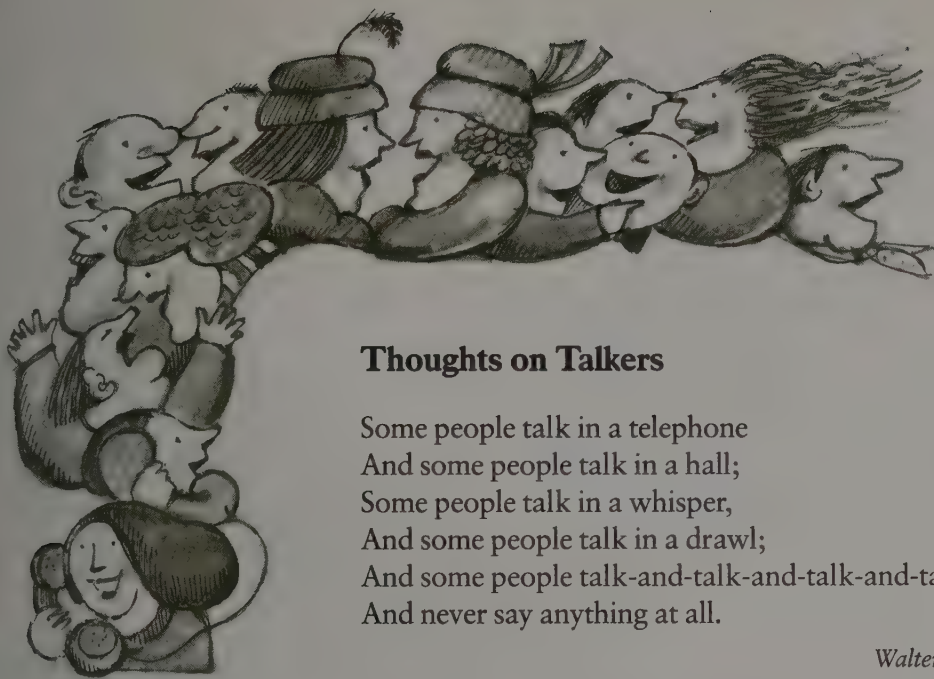
Oh, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond  
WHEN

*Daddy fell into the pond!*

*Alfred Noyes*







## Thoughts on Talkers

Some people talk in a telephone  
 And some people talk in a hall;  
 Some people talk in a whisper,  
 And some people talk in a drawl;  
 And some people talk-and-talk-and-talk-and-talk-and-talk  
 And never say anything at all.

*Walter R. Brooks*

## One Misty, Moisty Morning

One misty, moisty morning,  
 When cloudy was the weather,  
 I chanced to meet an old man,  
 Clothed all in leather.  
 He began to compliment  
 And I began to grin.  
 How do you do? And how do you do?  
 And how do you do again?

*Anonymous*

## Smart

My dad gave me one dollar bill  
 'Cause I'm his smartest son,  
 And I swapped it for two shiny quarters  
 'Cause two is more than one!

And then I took the quarters  
 And traded them to Lou  
 For three dimes—I guess he don't know  
 That three is more than two!

Just then, along came old blind Bates  
 And just 'cause he can't see  
 He gave me four nickels for my three dimes,  
 And four is more than three!

And I took the nickels to Hiram Coombs  
 Down at the seed-feed store,  
 And the fool gave me five pennies for them,  
 And five is more than four!

And then I went and showed my dad,  
 And he got red in the cheeks  
 And closed his eyes and shook his head—  
 Too proud of me to speak!

*Shel Silverstein*



## My Brother Bert

Pets are the hobby of my brother Bert.  
He used to go to school with a mouse in his shirt.

His hobby it grew, as some hobbies will,  
And grew and GREW and GREW until—

Oh don't breathe a word, pretend you haven't heard.  
A simply appalling thing has occurred—

The very thought makes me iller and iller:  
Bert's brought home a gigantic gorilla!

If you think that's really not such a scare,  
What if it quarrels with his grizzly bear?

You still think you could keep your head?  
What if the lion from under the bed

And the four ostriches that deposit  
Their football eggs in his bedroom closet

And the aardvark out of his bottom drawer  
All danced out and joined in the roar?

What if the pangolins were to caper  
Out of their nests behind the wallpaper?

With the fifty sorts of bats  
That hang on his hatstand like old hats,

And out of a shoebox the excitable platypus  
Along with the ocelot or jungle-cattypus?

The wombat, the dingo, the gecko, the grampus—  
How they would shake the house with their rumpus!

Not to forget the bandicoot  
Who would certainly peer from his battered old boot.

Why it could be a dreadful day,  
And what, oh what, would the neighbors say!





## Uncle

Uncle, whose inventive brains  
Kept evolving aeroplanes,  
Fell from an enormous height  
On my garden lawn, last night.  
Flying is a fatal sport,  
Uncle wrecked the tennis-court.

*Harry Graham*



## Growing Old

### Manners

I have an uncle I don't like,  
An aunt I cannot bear:  
She chucks me underneath the chin,  
He ruffles up my hair.

Another uncle I adore,  
Another aunty, too:  
She shakes me kindly by the hand,  
He says, "How do you do?"

*Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer*

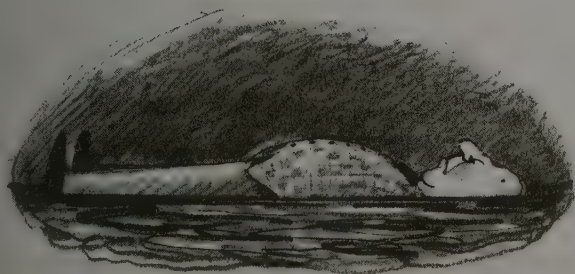
When I grow old I hope to be  
As beautiful as Grandma Lee.  
Her hair is soft and fluffy white.  
Her eyes are blue and candle bright.  
And down her cheeks are cunning piles  
Of little ripples when she smiles.

*Rose Henderson*

## Grandpapa

Grandpapa fell down a drain;  
Couldn't scramble out again.  
Now he's floating down the sewer  
There's one grandpapa the fewer.

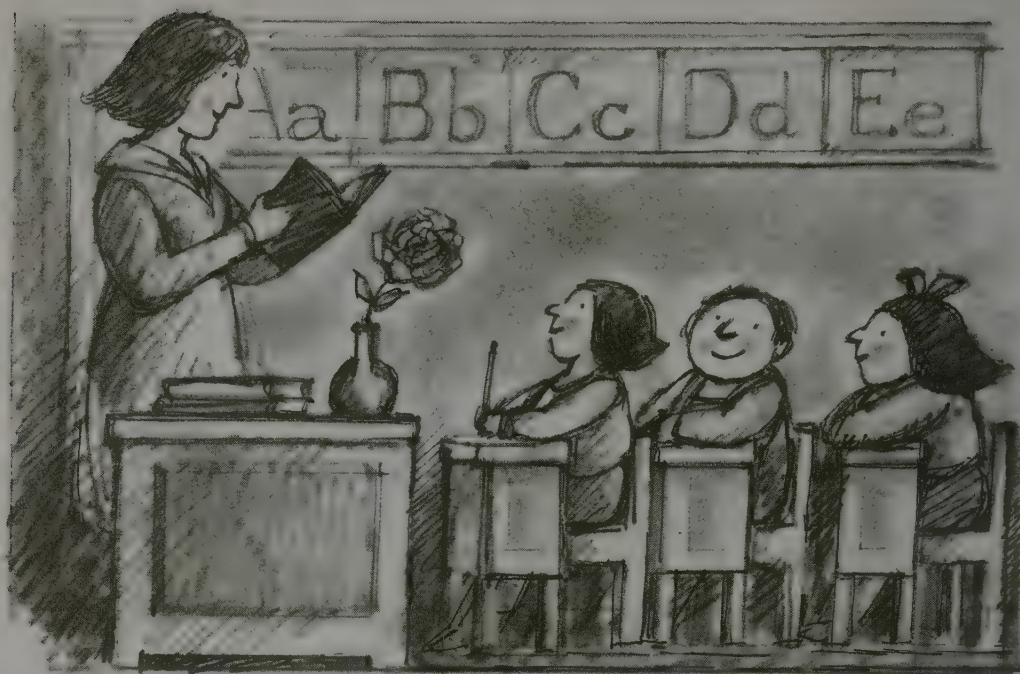
*Harry Graham*



## Grandpa Dropped His Glasses

Grandpa dropped his glasses once  
In a pot of dye,  
And when he put them on again  
He saw a purple sky.  
Purple birds were rising up  
From a purple hill,  
Men were grinding purple cider  
At a purple mill.  
Purple Adeline was playing  
With a purple doll,  
Little purple dragonflies  
Were crawling up the wall.  
And at the supper table  
He got crazy as a loon  
From eating purple apple dumplings  
With a purple spoon.

*Leroy F. Jackson*



### Miss Norma Jean Pugh,

FIRST GRADE TEACHER

Full of oatmeal  
 And gluggy with milk  
 On a morning in springtime  
 Soft as silk  
 When legs feel slow  
 And bumblebees buzz  
 And your nose tickles from  
 Dandelion fuzz  
 And you long to  
 Break a few  
 Cobwebs stuck with  
 Diamond dew  
 Stretched right out  
 In front of you—  
 When all you want  
 To do is *feel*  
 Until it's time for  
 Another meal,  
 Or sit right down  
 In the cool  
 Green grass  
 And watch the  
 Caterpillars pass. . . .  
 Who cares if

Two and two  
 Are four or five  
 Or red or blue?  
 Who cares whether  
 Six or seven  
 Come before or after  
 Ten or eleven?  
 Who cares if  
 C-A-T  
 Spells cat or rat  
 Or tit or tat  
 Or ball or bat?  
 Well, I do  
 But I didn't  
 Used to—  
 Until MISS NORMA JEAN PUGH!  
 She's terribly old  
 As people go  
 Twenty-one-or-five-or-six  
 Or so  
 But she makes a person want to  
 KNOW!

Mary O'Neill



## Godmother

There was an old lady  
 Who had three faces,  
 One for everyday,  
 And one for wearing places—  
 To meetings and parties,  
 Dull places like that—  
 A face that looked well  
 With a grown-up hat.  
 But she carried in her pocket  
 The face of an elf,  
 And she'd clap it on quick  
 When she felt like herself.  
 Sitting in the parlor  
 Of somebody's house,  
 She'd reach in her pocket  
 Sly as a mouse . . .  
 And there in the corner,  
 Sipping her tea,  
 Was a laughing elf-woman  
 Nobody could see!

*Phyllis B. Morden*



## The Little Boy and the Old Man

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."  
 Said the little old man, "I do that too."  
 The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."  
 "I do that too," laughed the little old man.  
 Said the little boy, "I often cry."  
 The old man nodded, "So do I."  
 "But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems  
 Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."  
 And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.  
 "I know what you mean," said the little old man.

*Shel Silverstein*

## Too Many Daves

Did I ever tell you that Mrs. McCave  
 Had twenty-three sons and she named them all Dave?  
 Well, she did. And that wasn't a smart thing to do.  
 You see, when she wants one and calls out, "Yoo-Hoo!  
 Come into the house, Dave!" she doesn't get *one*.  
 All twenty-three Daves of hers come on the run!  
 This makes things quite difficult at the McCaves'  
 As you can imagine, with so many Daves.  
 And often she wishes that, when they were born,  
 She had named one of them Bodkin Van Horn  
 And one of them Hoos-Foos. And one of them Snimm.  
 And one of them Hot-Shot. And one Sunny Jim.  
 And one of them Shadrack. And one of them Blinky.  
 And one of them Stuffy. And one of them Stinky.  
 Another one Putt-Putt. Another one Moon Face.  
 Another one Marvin O'Gravel Balloon Face.  
 And one of them Ziggy. And one Soggy Muff.  
 One Buffalo Bill. And one Biffalo Buff.  
 And one of them Sneepy. And one Weepy Weed.  
 And one Paris Garters. And one Harris Tweed.  
 And one of them Sir Michael Carmichael Zutt  
 And one of them Oliver Boliver Butt  
 And one of them Zanzibar Buck-Buck McFate . . .  
 But she didn't do it. And now it's too late.

*Dr. Seuss*



### Tombstone

Here lies  
A bully  
Who wasn't so wise.  
He picked on  
A fellow  
Who was his own size.

*Lucia M. and James L. Hymes, Jr.*

### Air Traveler

He comes from afar  
In a silver cigar  
And  
walks  
down  
the  
ramp  
Like a heavyweight champ.

*Lillian Morrison*

### House. For Sale

The doors are locked,  
the gray blinds drawn,  
new weeds sprung up  
in path and lawn.

For "She is dead,"  
I heard them say,  
the friend I saw  
there every day.

She used to wave  
from where she sat  
in the front room  
nursing a cat.

And always smiled  
as I passed by  
her little house,  
and always I

waved back at her,  
and then went on  
my way to school;  
and now she's gone.

And where's her cat?  
Does he now roam  
all by himself  
without a home?

The boards are up,  
and I feel glum  
because I know  
strangers will come.

No more I'll see  
my old friend's face,  
nor go again  
near that sad place.

*Leonard Clark*



### Jittery Jim

There's room in the bus  
For the two of us,  
But not for Jittery Jim.

He has a train  
And a rocket plane,  
He has a seal  
That can bark and swim,  
And a centipede  
With wiggly legs,  
And an ostrich  
Sitting on ostrich eggs,  
And crawfish  
Floating in oily kegs!

There's room in the bus  
For the two of us,  
But we'll shut the door on him

*William Jay Smith*



### On a Bad Singer

Swans sing before they die—'twere no bad thing  
Should certain persons die before they sing.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*



## Doctor Emmanuel

Doctor Emmanuel Harrison-Hyde  
Has a very big head with brains inside.  
I wonder what happens inside the brains  
That Doctor Emmanuel's head contains.

*James Reeves*



## Hog-Calling Competition

A bull-voiced young fellow of Pawling  
Competes in the meets for hog-calling;  
The people applaud,  
And the judges are awed,  
But the hogs find it simply appalling.

*Morris Bishop*

## Old Quin Queeribus

Old Quin Queeribus—  
He loved his garden so,  
He wouldn't have a rake around,  
A shovel or a hoe.  
  
For each potato's eyes he bought  
Fine spectacles of gold,  
And mufflers for the corn, to keep  
Its ears from getting cold.  
  
On every head of lettuce green—  
What do you think of that?—  
And every head of cabbage, too,  
He tied a garden hat.  
  
Old Quin Queeribus—  
He loved his garden so,  
He couldn't eat his growing things,  
He only let them grow!

*Nancy Byrd Turner*

## Jonathan Bing

Poor old Jonathan Bing  
Went out in his carriage to visit the King,  
But everyone pointed and said, "Look at that!  
Jonathan Bing has forgotten his hat!"  
(He'd forgotten his hat!)

Poor old Jonathan Bing  
Went home and put on a new hat for the King,  
But up by the palace a soldier said, "Hi!  
You can't see the King; you've forgotten your  
tie!"  
(He'd forgotten his tie!)

Poor old Jonathan Bing,  
He put on a *beautiful* tie for the King,  
But when he arrived an Archbishop said, "Ho!  
You can't come to court in pajamas, you know!"

Poor old Jonathan Bing  
Went home and addressed a short note to the  
King:

If you please will excuse me  
I won't come to tea;  
For home's the best place for  
All people like me!

*Beatrice Curtis Brown*

## There Was an Old Man with a Beard

There was an Old Man with a beard,  
Who said, "It is just as I feared!—  
Two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren,  
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

*Edward Lear*



## Poor Old Lady

Poor old lady, she swallowed a fly.  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a spider.  
It squirmed and wriggled and turned inside her.  
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a bird.  
How absurd! She swallowed a bird.  
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,  
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a cat.  
Think of that! She swallowed a cat.  
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird.  
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider.  
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a dog.  
She went the whole hog when she swallowed the dog.  
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,  
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,  
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider.  
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a cow.  
I don't know how she swallowed the cow.  
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog,  
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,  
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,  
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,  
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,  
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.  
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.



Poor old lady, she swallowed a horse.  
She died, of course.





## Fatty, Fatty, Boom-a-latty

Fatty, Fatty, Boom-a-latty;  
This is the way he goes!  
He is so large around the waist,  
He cannot see his toes!

This is Mr. Skinny Linny;  
See his long lean face!  
Instead of a regular suit of clothes,  
He wears an umbrella case!



*Anonymous*



## Solomon Grundy

Solomon Grundy,  
Born on a Monday,  
Christened on Tuesday,  
Married on Wednesday,  
Took ill on Thursday,  
Worse on Friday,  
Died on Saturday,  
Buried on Sunday,  
This is the end  
Of Solomon Grundy.

*Anonymous*

## Mr. Kartoffel

Mr. Kartoffel's a whimsical man;  
He drinks his beer from a watering-can,  
And for no good reason that I can see  
He fills his pockets with china tea.  
He parts his hair with a knife and fork  
And takes his ducks for a Sunday walk.  
Says he, "If my wife and I should choose  
To wear our stockings outside our shoes,  
Plant tulip-bulbs in the baby's pram  
And eat tobacco instead of jam,  
And fill the bath with cauliflowers,  
That's nobody's business at all but ours."

Says Mrs. K., "I may choose to travel  
With a sack of grass or a sack of gravel,  
Or paint my toes, one black, one white,  
Or sit on a birds' nest half the night—  
But whatever I do that is rum or rare,  
I rather think that it's my affair.  
So fill up your pockets with stamps and string,  
And let us be ready for anything!"  
Says Mr. K. to his whimsical wife,  
"How can we face the storms of life,  
Unless we are ready for anything?  
So if you've provided the stamps and string,  
Let us pump up the saddle and harness the horse  
And fill him with carrots and custard and sauce,  
Let us leap on him lightly and give him a shove  
And it's over the sea and away, my love!"

*James Reeves*

## Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker

"I look and smell," Aunt Sponge declared, "as lovely as a rose!

Just feast your eyes upon my face, observe my shapely nose!

Behold my heavenly silky locks!

And if I take off both my socks

You'll see my dainty toes."

"But don't forget," Aunt Spiker cried, "how much your tummy shows!"

Aunt Sponge went red. Aunt Spiker said, "My sweet, you cannot win,

Behold MY gorgeous curvy shape, my teeth, my charming grin!

Oh, beauteous me! How I adore

My radiant looks! And please ignore

The pimple on my chin."

"My dear old trout!" Aunt Sponge cried out. "You're only bones and skin!

"Such loveliness as I possess can only truly shine In Hollywood!" Aunt Sponge declared. "Oh, wouldn't that be fine!

I'd capture all the nations' hearts!

They'd give me all the leading parts!

The stars would all resign!"

"I think you'd make," Aunt Spiker said, "a lovely Frankenstein."

*Roald Dahl*



## The Sugar Lady

There is an old lady who lives down the hall,  
Wrinkled and gray and toothless and small.

At seven already she's up,

Going from door to door with a cup.

"Do you have any sugar?" she asks,

Although she's got more than you.

"Do you have any sugar," she asks,

Hoping you'll talk for a minute or two.

*Frank Asch*





## Lord Cray

The sight of his guests filled Lord Cray  
At breakfast with horrid dismay,  
So he launched off the spoons  
The pits from his prunes  
At their heads as they neared the buffet.

Edward Gorey



## Together

Because we do  
All things together  
All things improve,  
Even weather.

Our daily meat  
And bread taste better,  
Trees are greener,  
Rain is wetter.

Paul Engle

## The Opposite of Two

What is the opposite of *two*?  
*A lonely me, a lonely you.*

Richard Wilbur

## Sir Smasham Uppe

Good afternoon, Sir Smasham Uppe!  
We're having tea: do take a cup.  
Sugar and milk? Now let me see—  
Two lumps, I think? . . . Good gracious me!  
The silly thing slipped off your knee!  
Pray don't apologize, old chap:  
A very trivial mishap!  
So clumsy of you? How absurd!  
My dear Sir Smasham, not a word!  
Now do sit down and have another,  
And tell us all about your brother—  
You know, the one who broke his head.  
Is the poor fellow still in bed?—  
A chair—allow me, sir! . . . Great Scott!  
That *was* a nasty smash! Eh, what?  
Oh, not at all: the chair was old—  
Queen Anne, or so we have been told.  
We've got at least a dozen more:  
Just leave the pieces on the floor.  
I want you to admire our view:  
Come nearer to the window, do;  
And look how beautiful . . . Tut, tut!  
You didn't see that it was shut?  
I hope you are not badly cut!  
Not hurt? A fortunate escape!  
Amazing! Not a single scrape!  
And now, if you have finished tea,  
I fancy you might like to see  
A little thing or two I've got.  
That china plate? Yes, worth a lot:  
A beauty too . . . Ah, there it goes!  
I trust it didn't hurt your toes?  
Your elbow brushed it off the shelf?  
Of course: I've done the same myself.  
And now, my dear Sir Smasham—Oh,  
You surely don't intend to go?  
You *must* be off? Well, come again.  
So glad you're fond of porcelain!

E.V. Rieu





## NONSENSE !

*Nonsense? That's what makes no sense;  
a walrus waltzing on a fence,  
cats in vats of cheese and chowder,  
weasels sniffing sneezing powder,  
elephants with bright umbrellas  
dancing sprightly tarantellas,  
tigers dressed in spotted sweaters  
playing chess and writing letters.*

*Nonsense? Lizards clanging cymbals,  
flying eggs and weeping thimbles,  
sleeping prunes and crooning poodles,  
hopping spoons and creeping noodles,  
schools of fish that moo like cattle,  
bloomers marching into battle,  
pigs with wigs and purple wings.  
Nonsense! All these silly things.*









## Toot! Toot!

A peanut sat on a railroad track,  
His heart was all a-flutter;  
The five-fifteen came rushing by—  
Toot! toot! peanut butter!

*Anonymous*



## Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

*Lewis Carroll*

## Higglety, Pigglety, Pop!

Higglety, pigglety, pop!  
The dog has eaten the mop;  
The pig's in a hurry,  
The cat's in a flurry,  
Higglety, pigglety, pop!

*Samuel Goodrich*



## The Lobsters and the Fiddler Crab

The lobsters came ashore one night  
In the merry month of June,  
And coaxed the fiddler crab to play  
A rollicking tango tune.

The lobsters danced, the fiddler played  
Till morning, rosy red,  
Chased the dancers into the sea  
And the fiddler home to bed!

*Frederick J. Forster*



## The Common Cormorant

The common cormorant or shag  
Lays eggs inside a paper bag  
The reason you will see no doubt  
It is to keep the lightning out.  
But what these unobservant birds  
Have never noticed is that herds  
Of wandering bears may come with buns  
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

*Christopher Isherwood*

## On the Ning Nang Nong

On the Ning Nang Nong  
Where the Cows go Bong!  
And the Monkeys all say Boo!  
There's a Nong Nang Ning  
Where the trees go Ping!  
And the tea pots Jibber Jabber Joo.  
On the Nong Ning Nang  
All the mice go Clang!  
And you just can't catch 'em when they do!  
So it's Ning Nang Nong!  
Cows go Bong!  
Nong Nang Ning!  
Trees go Ping!  
Nong Ning Nang!  
The mice go Clang!  
What a noisy place to belong,  
Is the Ning Nang Ning Nang Nong! !

*Spike Milligan*



## McIntosh Apple

McIntosh apple  
Has nice rosy cheeks  
Romaine lettuce  
Turns green when she speaks  
Cherry tomato  
Has gorgeous red hair  
But I'm mashed potatoes  
And fall down the stairs.

*Steven Kroll*



# The Butterfly's Ball

Come take up your hats, and away let us haste,  
To the Butterfly's Ball, and the Grasshopper's Feast.  
The trumpeter Gadfly has summoned the crew,  
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

On the smooth-shaven grass by the side of a wood,  
Beneath a broad oak which for ages has stood,  
See the children of earth and the tenants of air,  
For an evening's amusement together repair.

And there came the Beetle, so blind and so black,  
Who carried the Emmet, his friend, on his back.  
And there came the Gnat, and the Dragonfly too,  
And all their relations, green, orange, and blue.

And there came the Moth, with her plumage of down,  
And the Hornet, with jacket of yellow and brown;  
Who with him the Wasp, his companion, did bring,  
But they promised that evening, to lay by their sting.

Then the sly little Dormouse crept out of his hole,  
And led to the feast his blind cousin the Mole.  
And the Snail, with his horns peeping out of his shell,  
Came, fatigued with the distance, the length of an ell.

A mushroom their table, and on it was laid  
A water-dock leaf, which a tablecloth made.  
The viands were various, to each of their taste,  
And the Bee brought the honey to sweeten the feast.

With steps most majestic the Snail did advance,  
And he promised the gazers a minuet to dance;  
But they all laughed so loud that he drew in his head,  
And went in his own little chamber to bed.

Then, as evening gave way to the shadows of night,  
Their watchman, the Glow-worm, came out with his light.  
So home let us hasten, while yet we can see;  
For no watchman is waiting for you and for me.

William Roscoe





## Way Down South

Way down South where bananas grow,  
A grasshopper stepped on an elephant's toe.  
The elephant said, with tears in his eyes,  
"Pick on somebody your own size."

*Anonymous*

## The Contrary Waiter

A tarsier worked as a waiter.  
He wore a stiff collar and tie.  
He said, "Of all creatures who cater,  
None are calm and undaunted as I."

When asked to serve mutton with mustard,  
He'd scribble a note on a pad  
And return with a half-eaten custard  
And say it was all that they had.

When a cup of hot cocoa was ordered,  
His eyes would defiantly gleam;  
He'd bring back asparagus bordered  
With heaps of vanilla ice cream.

If cucumber salad was wanted,  
The customer suffered a shock:  
The tarsier, calm and undaunted,  
Brought rice pudding, stuffed in a sock.

He never brought what was requested.  
There was always a terrible risk.  
And customers—if they protested—  
Were splattered with hot oyster bisque.

One day an immense alligator  
Sat down at a table to sup.  
He grappled the contemptible waiter  
And ate him contemptibly up.

*Edgar Parker*



## Whoops!

A horse and a flea and three blind mice  
Sat on a curbstone shooting dice.  
The horse he slipped and fell on the flea.  
The flea said, "Whoops, there's a horse on me."

*Anonymous*



## The Duel

The gingham dog and the calico cat  
 Side by side on the table sat;  
 'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)  
 Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!  
 The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate  
 Appeared to know as sure as fate  
 There was going to be a terrible spat.  
*(I wasn't there; I simply state  
 What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)*

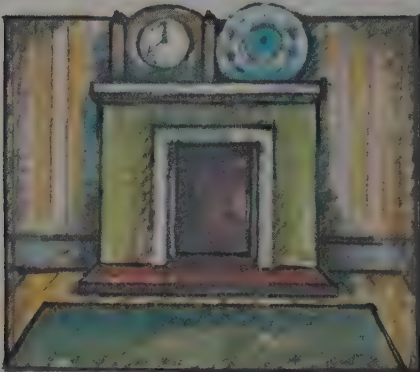
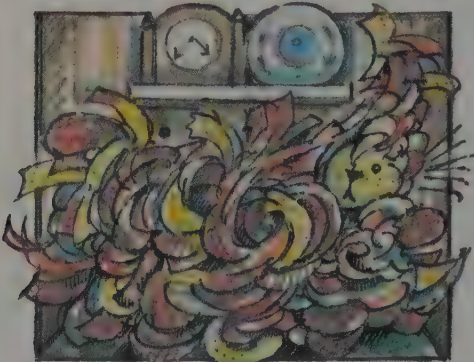
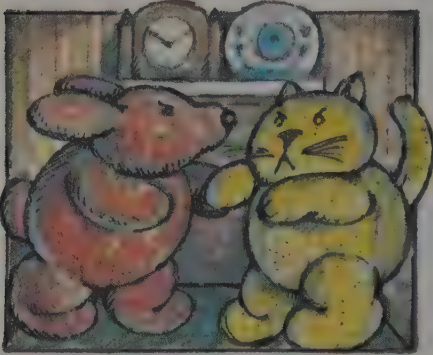
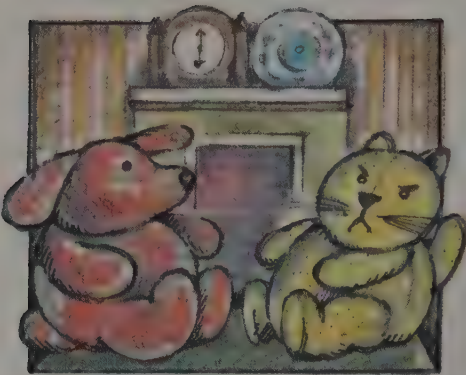
The gingham dog went "bow-wow-wow!"  
 And the calico cat replied "mee-ow!"  
 The air was littered, an hour or so,  
 With bits of gingham and calico,  
 While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place  
 Up with its hands before its face,  
 For it always dreaded a family row!  
*(Now mind: I'm only telling you  
 What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)*

The Chinese plate looked very blue,  
 And wailed, "Oh dear! what shall we do!"  
 But the gingham dog and the calico cat  
 Wallowed this way and tumbled that,  
 Employing every tooth and claw  
 In the awfulest way you ever saw—  
 And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!  
*(Don't fancy I exaggerate—  
 I got my news from the Chinese plate!)*

Next morning, where the two had sat  
 They found no trace of dog or cat;  
 And some folks think unto this day  
 That burglars stole that pair away!

But the truth about the cat and pup  
 Is this: they ate each other up!  
 Now what do you really think of that!  
*(The old Dutch clock it told me so,  
 And that is how I came to know.)*

Eugene Field



## The Owl and the Pussy-cat

### I

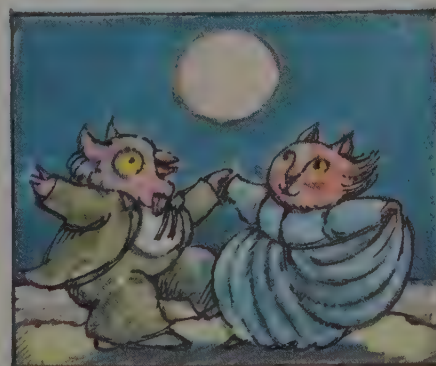
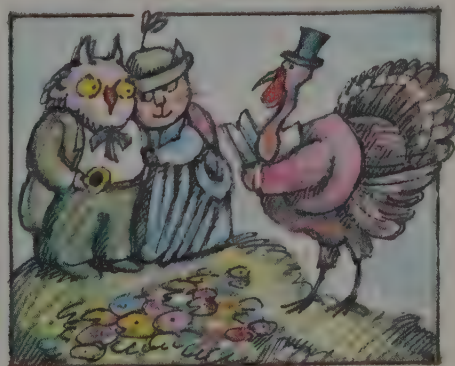
The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
 In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
 They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
 Wrapped up in a five-pound note.  
 The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
 And sang to a small guitar,  
 "O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,  
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
 You are,  
 You are!  
 What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

### II

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!  
 How charmingly sweet you sing!  
 O let us be married! too long we have tarried:  
 But what shall we do for a ring?"  
 They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
 To the land where the Bong-tree grows  
 And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
 With a ring at the end of his nose,  
 His nose,  
 His nose,  
 With a ring at the end of his nose.

### III

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
 Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."  
 So they took it away, and were married next day  
 By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
 They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
 Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
 And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
 They danced by the light of the moon,  
 The moon,  
 The moon,  
 They danced by the light of the moon.



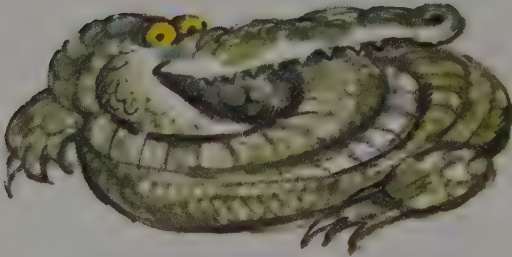


## The Hare and the Pig

When the hare and the pig had some pleasure to plan,  
They each found they had much better fun  
If they planned it together and both of them said,  
"Surely two heads are better than one!"

But the hare had the toothache, the pig got the mumps,  
Then they cried, "Oh, just one head will do!  
Just to think what we'd suffer if each had two heads!  
Surely one head is better than two!"

*L. J. Bridgman*



## The Alligator

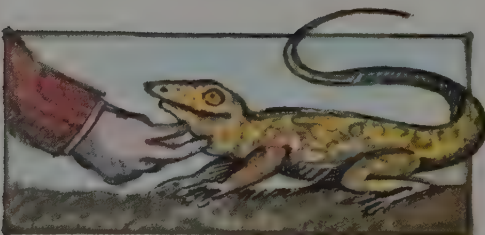
The alligator chased his tail  
Which hit him on the snout;  
He nibbled, gobbled, swallowed it,  
And turned right inside-out.

*Mary Macdonald*

## The Lizard

The Time to Tickle a Lizard,  
Is Before, or Right After, a Blizzard.  
Now the place to begin  
Is just under his Chin—  
And here's more Advice:  
Don't Poke more than Twice  
At an Intimate Place like his Gizzard.

*Theodore Roethke*



## The Serpent

There was a Serpent who had to sing.  
There was. There was.  
He simply gave up Serpentine.  
Because. Because.

He didn't like his Kind of Life;  
He couldn't find a proper Wife;  
He was a Serpent with a soul;  
He got no Pleasure down his Hole.  
And so, of course, he had to Sing,  
And Sing he did, like Anything!  
The Birds, they were, they were Astounded;  
And various Measures Propounded  
To stop the Serpent's Awful Racket:  
They bought a Drum. He wouldn't Whack it.  
They sent—you always send—to Cuba  
And got a Most Commodious Tuba;  
They got a Horn, they got a Flute,  
But Nothing would suit.  
He said, "Look, Birds, all this is futile:  
I do *not* like to Bang or Tootle."  
And then he cut loose with a Horrible Note  
That practically split the Top of his Throat.  
"You see," he said, with a Serpent's Leer,  
"I'm Serious about my Singing Career!"  
And the Woods Resounded with many a Shriek  
As the Birds flew off to the End of Next Week.

*Theodore Roethke*



## I Had a Little Pig

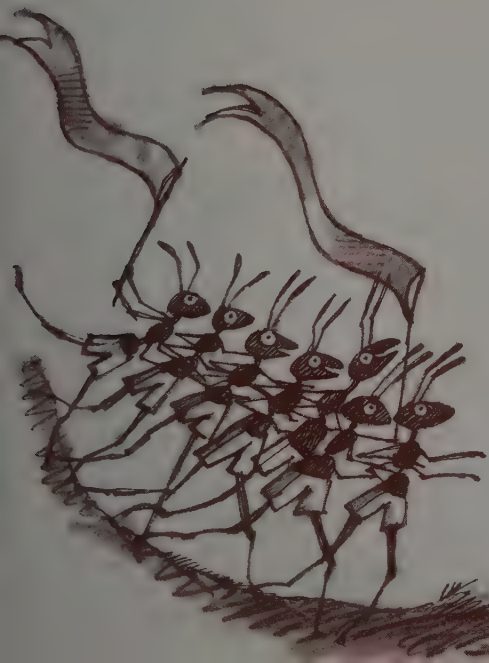
I had a little pig,  
I fed him in a trough,  
He got so fat  
His tail dropped off.  
So I got me a hammer,  
And I got me a nail,  
And I made my little pig  
A brand-new tail.

*Anonymous*

## The Shark

Oh, what a lark to fish for shark  
With Grandpapa for bait!  
The Shark would be in time for tea  
And Grandpapa be *late*.

*J. J. Bell*



## The Ants at the Olympics

At last year's Jungle Olympics,  
the Ants were completely outclassed.  
In fact, from an entry of sixty-two teams,  
the Ants came their usual last.

They didn't win one single medal.  
Not that that's a surprise.  
The reason was not lack of trying,  
but more their unfortunate size.

While the cheetahs won most of the sprinting  
and the hippos won putting the shot,  
the Ants tried sprinting but couldn't,  
and tried to put but could not.

It was sad for the ants 'cause they're sloggers.  
They turn out for every event.  
With their shorts and their bright orange tee-shirts,  
their athletes are proud they are sent.

They came last at the high jump and hurdles,  
which they say they'd have won, but they fell.  
They came last in the four hundred meters  
and last in the swimming as well.

They came last in the long-distance running,  
though they say they might have come first.  
And they might if the other sixty-one teams  
hadn't put in a finishing burst.

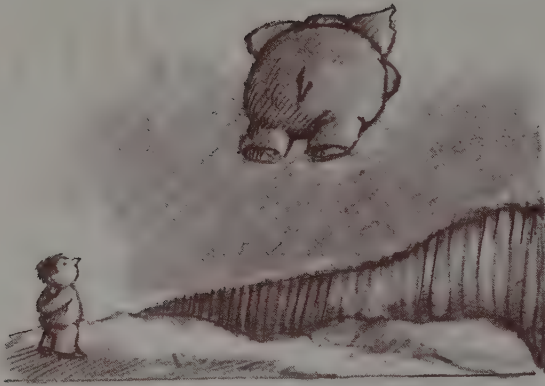
But each year they turn up regardless.  
They're popular in the parade.  
The other teams whistle and cheer them,  
aware of the journey they've made.

For the Jungle Olympics in August,  
they have to set off New Year's Day.  
They didn't arrive the year before last.  
They set off but went the wrong way.

So long as they try there's a reason.  
After all, it's only a sport.  
They'll be back next year to bring up the rear,  
and that's an encouraging thought.

*Richard Digance*





### I Asked My Mother

I asked my mother for fifty cents  
To see the elephant jump the fence.  
He jumped so high that he touched the sky  
And never came back till the Fourth of July.

*Anonymous*

### The Animal Fair

I went to the animal fair,  
The birds and beasts were there.  
The big baboon, by the light of the moon,  
Was combing his auburn hair.  
The monkey, he got drunk,  
And sat on the elephant's trunk.  
The elephant sneezed and fell on his knees,  
And what became of the monk, the monk?

*Anonymous*



### The Walrus

The Walrus lives on icy floes  
And unsuspecting Eskimoes.

Don't bring your wife to Arctic Tundra  
A Walrus may bob up from undra.

*Michael Flanders*

### The Purple Cow

I never saw a Purple Cow,  
I never hope to see one;  
But I can tell you, anyhow,  
I'd rather see than be one.

*Gelett Burgess*



### Algy Met a Bear

Algy met a bear,  
A bear met Algy.  
The bear was bulgy,  
The bulge was Algy.

*Anonymous*

## Adventures of Isabel

Isabel met an enormous bear,  
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't care;  
 The bear was hungry, the bear was ravenous,  
 The bear's big mouth was cruel and cavernous.  
 The bear said, Isabel, glad to meet you,  
 How do, Isabel, now I'll eat you!  
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,  
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry.  
 She washed her hands and she straightened her hair up,  
 Then Isabel quietly ate the bear up.

Once in a night as black as pitch  
 Isabel met a wicked old witch.  
 The witch's face was cross and wrinkled,  
 The witch's gums with teeth were sprinkled.  
 Ho ho, Isabel! the old witch crowed,  
 I'll turn you into an ugly toad!  
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,  
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry,  
 She showed no rage and she showed no rancor,  
 But she turned the witch into milk and drank her.

Isabel met a hideous giant,  
 Isabel continued self-reliant.  
 The giant was hairy, the giant was horrid,  
 He had one eye in the middle of his forehead.  
 Good morning, Isabel, the giant said,  
 I'll grind your bones to make my bread.  
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,  
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry.  
 She nibbled the Zwieback that she always fed off,  
 And when it was gone, she cut the giant's head off.

Isabel met a troublesome doctor,  
 He punched and he poked till he really shocked her.  
 The doctor's talk was of coughs and chills  
 And the doctor's satchel bulged with pills.  
 The doctor said unto Isabel,  
 Swallow this, it will make you well.  
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,  
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry.  
 She took those pills from the pill concocter,  
 And Isabel calmly cured the doctor.





## Alligator Pie

Alligator pie, alligator pie,  
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna die.  
Give away the green grass, give away the sky,  
But don't give away my alligator pie.

Alligator stew, alligator stew,  
If I don't get some I don't know what I'll do.  
Give away my furry hat, give away my shoe,  
But don't give away my alligator stew.

Alligator soup, alligator soup,  
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna droop.  
Give away my hockey-stick, give away my hoop,  
But don't give away my alligator soup.

*Dennis Lee*



## Did You Ever Go Fishing?

Did you ever go fishing on a bright sunny day—  
Sit on a fence and have the fence give way?  
Slide off the fence and rip your pants,  
And see the little fishes do the hootchy-kootchy dance

*Anonymous*

## Beela by the Sea

Catch a floater, catch an eel,  
Catch a lazy whale,  
Catch an oyster by the heel  
And put him in a pail.

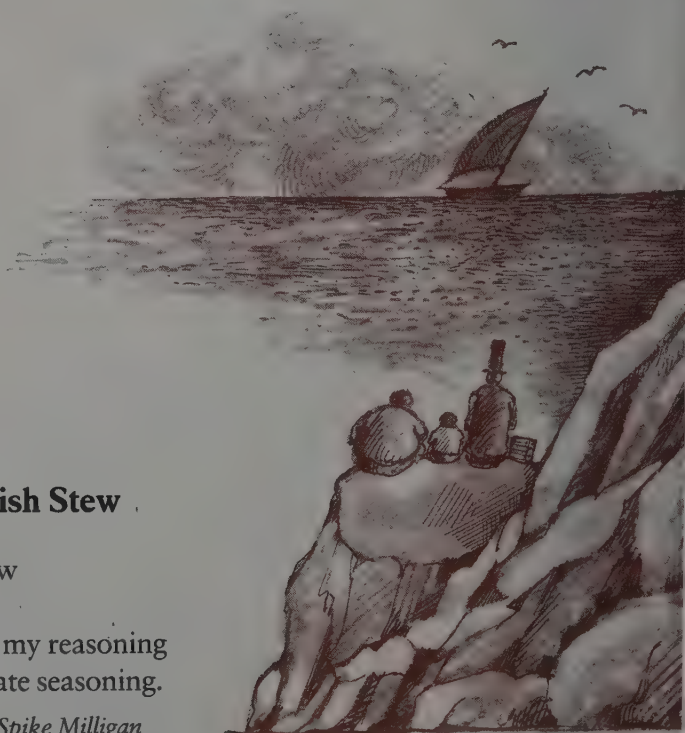
There's lots of work for Uncle Ike,  
Fatty Ford and me  
All day long and half the night  
At Beela by the sea.

*Leroy F. Jackson*

## You Must Never Bath in an Irish Stew

You must never bath in an Irish Stew  
It's a most illogical thing to do  
But should you persist against my reasoning  
Don't fail to add the appropriate seasoning.

*Spike Milligan*



## The Folk Who Live in Backward Town

The folk who live in Backward Town  
Are inside out and upside down.  
They wear their hats inside their heads  
And go to sleep beneath their beds.  
They only eat the apple peeling  
And take their walks across the ceiling.

*Mary Ann Hoberman*

## Sensitive, Seldom and Sad

Sensitive, Seldom and Sad are we,  
As we wend our way to the sneezing sea,  
With our hampers full of thistles and fronds  
To plant round the edge of the dab-fish ponds;  
Oh, so Sensitive, Seldom and Sad—  
Oh, so Seldom and Sad.

In the shambling shades of the shelving shore,  
We will sing us a song of the Long Before,  
And light a red fire and warm our paws  
For it's chilly, it is, on the Desolate shores,  
For those who are Sensitive, Seldom and Sad,  
For those who are Seldom and Sad.

Sensitive, Seldom and Sad we are,  
As we wander along through Lands Afar,  
To the sneezing sea, where the sea-weeds be,  
And the dab-fish ponds that are waiting for we  
Who are, Oh, so Sensitive, Seldom and Sad,  
Oh, so Seldom and Sad.

*Mervyn Peake*



## Josephine

Josephine, Josephine,  
The meanest girl I've ever seen.  
Her eyes are red, her hair is green  
And she takes baths in gasoline.

*Alexander Resnikoff*



## Father William

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,  
 "And your hair has become very white;  
 And yet you incessantly stand on your head—  
 Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,  
 "I feared it might injure the brain;  
 But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,  
 Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,  
 And have grown most uncommonly fat;  
 Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—  
 Pray, what is the reason of that?"

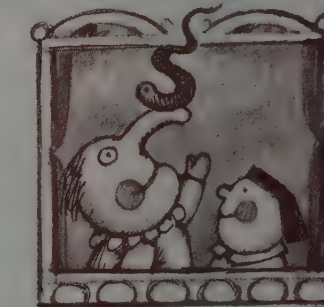
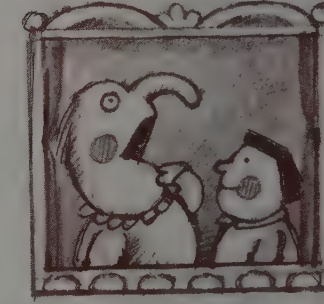
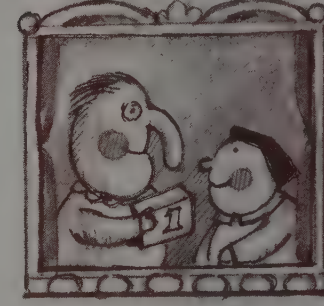
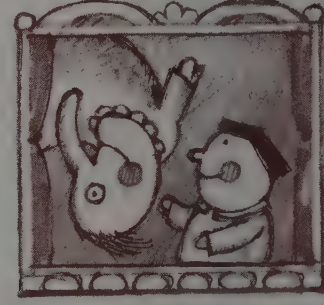
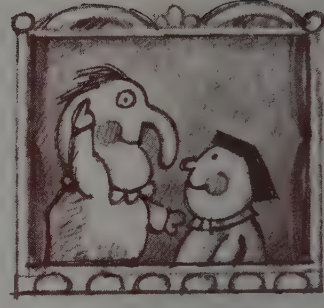
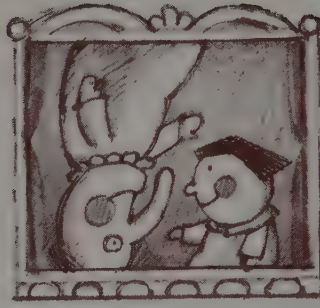
"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,  
 "I kept all my limbs very supple  
 By the use of this ointment—one shilling the box—  
 Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak  
 For anything tougher than suet;  
 Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak—  
 Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,  
 And argued each case with my wife;  
 And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw  
 Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose  
 That your eye was as steady as ever;  
 Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—  
 What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"  
 Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!  
 Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?  
 Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!"





## Johnnie Crack and Flossie Snail

Johnnie Crack and Flossie Snail  
Kept their baby in a milking pail  
Flossie Snail and Johnnie Crack  
One would pull it out and one would put it back

O it's my turn now said Flossie Snail  
To take the baby from the milking pail  
And it's my turn now said Johnnie Crack  
To smack it on the head and put it back

Johnny Crack and Flossie Snail  
Kept their baby in a milking pail  
One would put it back and one would pull it out  
And all it had to drink was ale and stout  
For Johnnie Crack and Flossie Snail  
Always used to say that stout and ale  
Was good for a baby in a milking pail.

*Dylan Thomas*

## The Snail's Dream

A snail, who had a way, it seems,  
Of dreaming very curious dreams,  
Once dreamed he was—you'll never guess!—  
The Lightning Limited Express!

*Oliver Herford*

## The Twins

In form and feature, face and limb,  
I grew so like my brother,  
That folks got taking me for him,  
And each for one another.  
It puzzled all our kith and kin,  
It reached an awful pitch;  
For one of us was born a twin,  
Yet not a soul knew which.

One day (to make the matter worse),  
Before our names were fixed,  
As we were being washed by nurse  
We got completely mixed;  
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree  
(Or rather nurse's whim),  
My brother John got christened *me*,  
And I got christened *him*.

This fatal likeness even dogged  
My footsteps when at school,  
And I was always getting flogged  
For John turned out a fool.  
I put this question hopelessly  
To everyone I knew—  
What *would* you do, if you were me,  
To prove that you were *you*?

Our close resemblance turned the tide  
Of my domestic life;  
For somehow my intended bride  
Became my brother's wife.  
In short, year after year the same  
Absurd mistake went on;  
And when I died—the neighbors came  
And buried brother John!

*Henry S. Leigh*







### The New Vestments

There lived an old man in the Kingdom of Tess,  
Who invented a purely original dress;  
And when it was perfectly made and complete,  
He opened the door, and walked into the street.

By way of a hat, he'd a loaf of Brown Bread,  
In the middle of which he inserted his head;  
His Shirt was made up of no end of dead Mice,  
The warmth of whose skins was quite fluffy and nice;  
His Drawers were of Rabbit-skins; so were his Shoes;  
His Stockings were skins—but it is not known whose;  
His Waistcoat and Trousers were made of Pork Chops;  
His Buttons were Jujubes, and Chocolate Drops;  
His Coat was all Pancakes with Jam for a border,  
And a girdle of Biscuits to keep it in order;  
And he wore over all, as a screen from bad weather,  
A Cloak of green Cabbage-leaves stitched all together.

He had walked a short way, when he heard a great noise,  
Of all sorts of Beasticles, Birdlings, and Boys;  
And from every long street and dark lane in the town  
Beasts, Birdles, and Boys in a tumult rushed down.  
Two Cows and a half ate his Cabbage-leaf Cloak;  
Four Apes seized his Girdle, which vanished like smoke;



Three Kids ate up half of his Pancaky Coat,  
 And the tails were devoured by an ancient He Goat;  
 An army of Dogs in a twinkling tore up his  
 Pork Waistcoat and Trousers to give to their Puppies;  
 And while they were growling, and mumbling the Chops,  
 Ten Boys prigged the Jujubes and Chocolate Drops.  
 He tried to run back to his house, but in vain,  
 For Scores of fat Pigs came again and again;  
 They rushed out of stables and hovels and doors,  
 They tore off his stockings, his shoes, and his drawers;  
 And now from the housetops with screechings descend,  
 Striped, spotted, white, black, and gray Cats without end,  
 They jumped on his shoulders and knocked off his hat,  
 When Crows, Ducks, and Hens made a mincemeat of that,  
 They speedily flew at his sleeves in a trice,  
 And utterly tore up his Shirt of dead Mice;  
 They swallowed the last of his Shirt with a squall,  
 Whereon he ran home with no clothes on at all.

And he said to himself as he bolted the door,  
 "I will not wear a similar dress anymore,  
 "Anymore, anymore, anymore, nevermore!"





## Pumberly Pott's Unpredictable Niece

Pumberly Pott's unpredictable niece  
declared with her usual zeal  
that she would devour, by piece after piece,  
her uncle's new automobile.

She set to her task very early one morn  
by consuming the whole carburetor;  
then she swallowed the windshield, the headlights and horn  
and the steering wheel just a bit later.

She chomped on the doors, on the handles and locks,  
on the valves and the pistons and rings;  
on the air pump and fuel pump and spark plugs and shocks,  
on the brakes and the axles and springs.

When her uncle arrived she was chewing a hash  
made of leftover hoses and wires  
(she'd just finished eating the clutch and the dash  
and the steel-belted radial tires).

"Oh, what have you done to my auto," he cried,  
"you strange unpredictable lass?"

"The thing wouldn't work, Uncle Pott," she replied,  
and he wept, "It was just out of gas."

*Jack Prelutsky*

## Don't Worry if Your Job Is Small

Don't worry if your job is small,  
And your rewards are few.  
Remember that the mighty oak,  
Was once a nut like you.

*Anonymous*

## Tender-heartedness

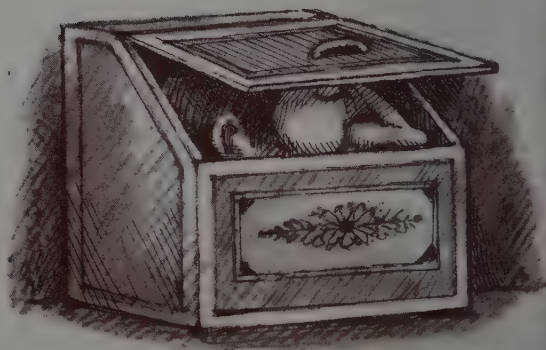
Billy, in one of his nice new sashes,  
Fell in the fire and was burned to ashes;  
Now, although the room grows chilly,  
I haven't the heart to poke poor Billy.

*Harry Graham*

## Number Nine, Penwiper Mews

From Number Nine, Penwiper Mews,  
There is really abominable news:  
They've discovered a head  
In the box for the bread,  
But nobody seems to know whose.

*Edward Gorey*



## A Young Lady of Lynn

There was a young lady of Lynn,  
Who was so uncommonly thin  
That when she essayed  
To drink lemonade,  
She slipped through the straw and fell in.

*Anonymous*



## Jimmy Jet and His TV Set

I'll tell you the story of Jimmy Jet—  
And you know what I tell you is true.  
He loved to watch his TV set  
Almost as much as you.

He watched all day, he watched all night  
Till he grew pale and lean,  
From "The Early Show" to "The Late Late Show"  
And all the shows between.

He watched till his eyes were frozen wide,  
And his bottom grew into his chair.  
And his chin turned into a tuning dial,  
And antennae grew out of his hair.

And his brains turned into TV tubes,  
And his face to a TV screen.  
And two knobs saying "VERT." and "HORIZ."  
Grew where his ears had been.

And he grew a plug that looked like a tail  
So we plugged in little Jim.  
And now instead of him watching TV  
We all sit around and watch him.

*Shel Silverstein*

## Herbert Glerbett

Herbert Glerbett, rather round,  
swallowed sherbet by the pound,  
fifty pounds of lemon sherbet  
went inside of Herbert Glerbett.

With that glob inside his lap  
Herbert Glerbett took a nap,  
and as he slept, the boy dissolved,  
and from the mess a thing evolved—

a thing that is a ghastly green,  
a thing the world had never seen,  
a puddle thing, a gooey pile  
of something strange that does not smile.

Now if you're wise, and if you're sly,  
you'll swiftly pass this creature by,  
it is no longer Herbert Glerbett.  
Whatever it is, do not disturb it.

*Jack Prelutsky*

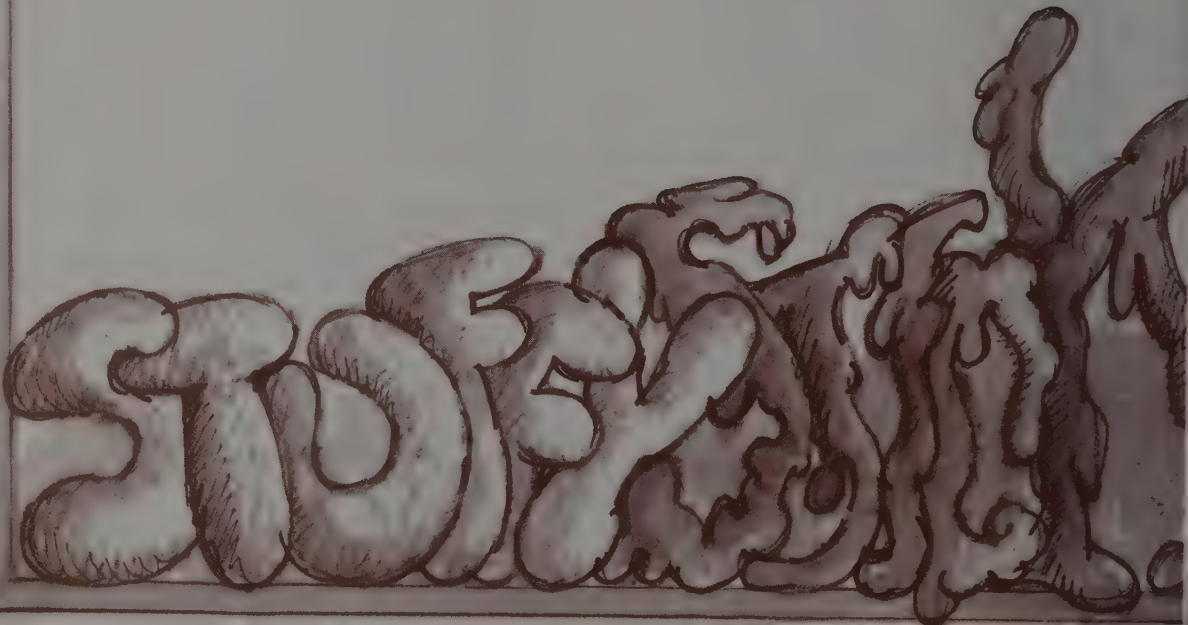


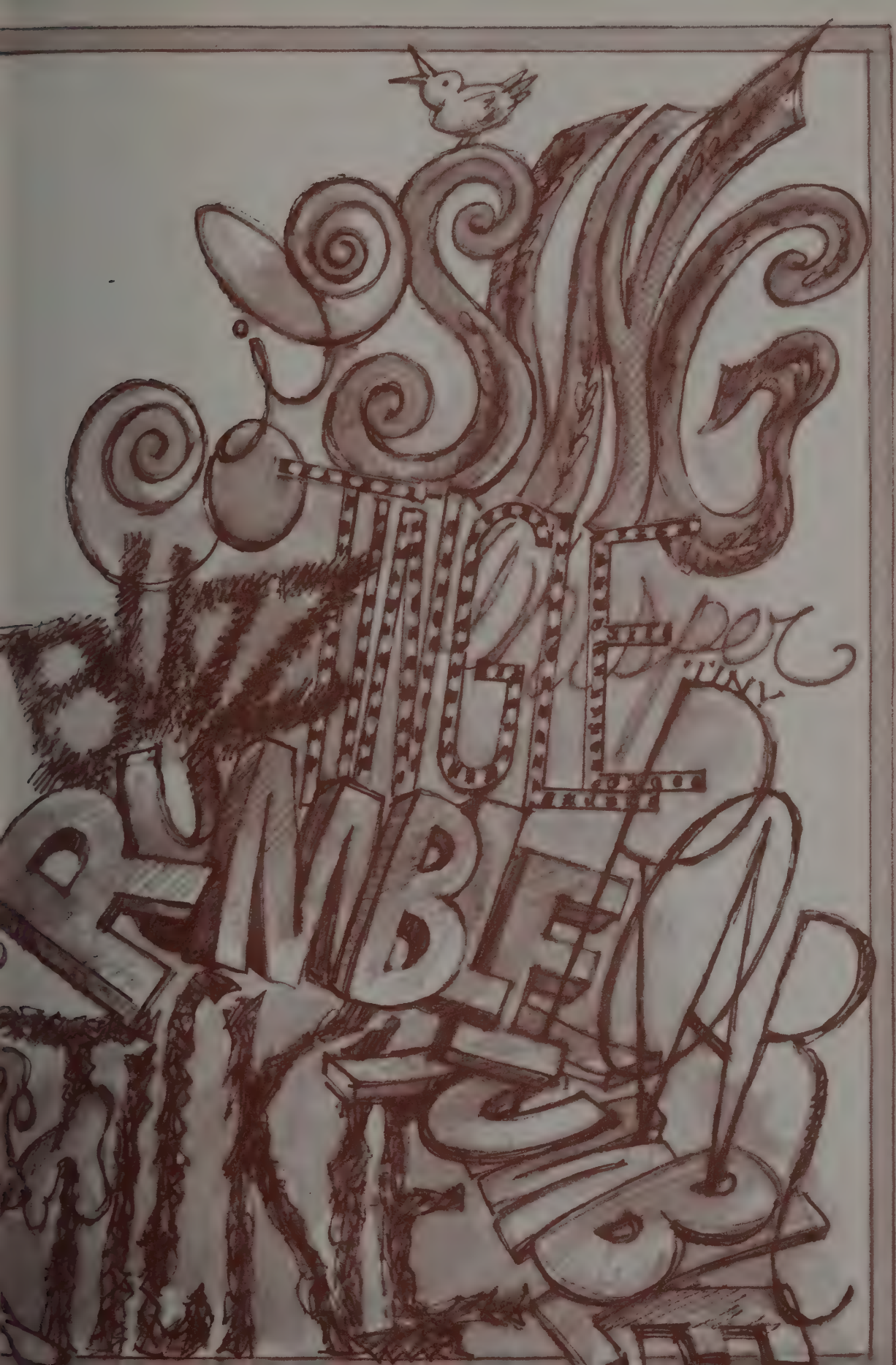
# ALPHABET STEW

*Words can be stuffy, as sticky as glue,  
but words can be tutored to tickle you too,  
to rumble and tumble and tingle and sing,  
to buzz like a bumblebee, coil like a spring.*

*Juggle their letters and jumble their sounds,  
swirl them in circles and stack them in mounds,  
twist them and tease them and turn them about,  
teach them to dance upside down, inside out.*

*Make mighty words whisper and tiny words roar  
in ways no one ever had thought of before;  
cook an improbable alphabet stew,  
and words will reveal little secrets to you.*









## The Tutor

A tutor who tootled the flute  
Was teaching two tooters to toot  
Said the two to the tutor,  
"Is it harder to toot,  
Or to tutor two tooters to toot?"

*Carolyn Wells*

## A Fly and a Flea in a Flue

A fly and a flea in a flue  
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee!"  
"Let us fly!" said the flea,  
And they flew through a flaw in the flue.

*Anonymous*



## Weather

Whether the weather be fine  
Or whether the weather be not,  
Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather,  
Whether we like it or not.

*Anonymous*

## Two Witches

There was a witch  
The witch had an itch  
The itch was so itchy it  
Gave her a twitch.

Another witch  
Admired the twitch  
So she started twitching  
Though she had no itch.

Now both of them twitch  
So it's hard to tell which  
Witch has the itch and  
Which witch has the twitch.

*Alexander Resnikoff*

## The Cow

The cow mainly moos as she chooses to moo  
and she chooses to moo as she chooses.

She furthermore chews as she chooses to chew  
and she chooses to chew as she muses.

If she chooses to moo she may moo to amuse  
or may moo just to moo as she chooses.

If she chooses to chew she may moo as she chews  
or may chew just to chew as she muses.

*Jack Prelutsky*



## The Bluffalo

Oh, do not tease the Bluffalo  
With quick-step or with shuffalo  
When you are in a scuffalo  
In Bluffalo's backyard.

For it has quite enoughalo  
Of people playing toughalo  
And when it gives a cuffalo  
It gives it very hard.

But if by chance a scuffalo  
Occurs twixt you and Bluffalo,  
Pray tempt it with a truffalo  
And catch it off its guard.

And while it eats that stuffalo  
You can escape the Bluffalo  
And with a huff and puffalo  
Depart from its backyard.

*Jane Yolen*



## Habits of the Hippopotamus

The hippopotamus is strong  
And huge of head and broad of bustle;  
The limbs on which he rolls along  
Are big with hippopotomuscle.

He does not greatly care for sweets  
Like ice cream, apple pie, or custard,  
But takes to flavor what he eats  
A little hippopotomustard.

The hippopotamus is true  
To all his principles, and just;  
He always tries his best to do  
The things one hippopotomust.

He never rides in trucks or trams,  
In taxicabs or omnibuses,  
And so keeps out of traffic jams  
And other hippopotomusses.

*Arthur Guiterman*



## Moses

Moses supposes his toeses are roses,  
But Moses supposes erroneously;  
For nobody's toeses are posies of roses  
As Moses supposes his toeses to be.

*Anonymous*

## Antonio

Antonio, Antonio,  
Was tired of living alonio.  
He thought he would woo  
Miss Lissamy Lou,  
Miss Lissamy Lucy Molonio.

Antonio, Antonio,  
Rode off on his polo-ponio.  
He found the fair maid  
In a bowery shade,  
A-sitting and knitting alonio.

Antonio, Antonio,  
Said, "If you will be my ownio  
I'll love you true,  
And I'll buy for you,  
An icery creamery conio!"

"Oh, nonio, Antonio!  
You're far too bleak and bonio!  
And all that I wish,  
You singular fish,  
Is that you will quickly begonio."

Antonio, Antonio,  
He uttered a dismal moanio;  
Then ran off and hid  
(Or I'm told that he did)  
In the Antarctical Zonio.

*Laura E. Richards*





### The Puffin

Upon this cake of ice is perched  
The paddle-footed Puffin;  
To find his double we have searched,  
But have discovered—Nuffin!

*Robert Williams Wood*

### Eletelephony

Once there was an elephant,  
Who tried to use the telephant—  
No! no! I mean an elephone  
Who tried to use the telephone—  
(Dear me! I am not certain quite  
That even now I've got it right.)

Howe'er it was, he got his trunk  
Entangled in the telephunk;  
The more he tried to get it free,  
The louder buzzed the telephee—  
(I fear I'd better drop the song  
Of elephop and telephong!)

*Laura E. Richards*

### Mr. Bidery's Spidery Garden

Poor old Mr. Bidery.  
His garden's awfully spidery:  
Bugs use it as a hidery.

In April it was seedery,  
By May a mass of weedery;  
And oh, the bugs! How greedery.

White flowers out or buddery,  
Potatoes made it spuddery;  
And when it rained, what muddery!

June days grow long and shaddery;  
Bullfrog forgets his taddery;  
The spider legs his laddery.

With cabbages so odory,  
Snapdragon soon explodery,  
At twilight all is toadery.

Young corn still far from foddery  
No sign of goldenrodery,  
Yet feeling low and doddery

Is poor old Mr. Bidery,  
His garden lush and spidery,  
His apples green, not cidery.

Pea-picking is so poddery!

*David McCord*



## Sing Me a Song of Teapots and Trumpets

Sing me a song  
of teapots and trumpets:  
Trumpets and teapots  
And tippets and taps,  
trippers and trappers  
and jelly bean wrappers  
and pigs in pajamas  
with zippers and snaps.



### Banananananananana

I thought I'd win the spelling bee  
And get right to the top,  
But I started to spell "banana,"  
And I didn't know when to stop.

*William Cole*

Sing me a song  
of sneakers and snoopers:  
Snookers and sneapers  
and snappers and snacks,  
snorkels and snarkles,  
a seagull that gargles,  
and gargoyles and gryphons  
and other knickknacks.

Sing me a song  
of parsnips and pickles:  
and pumpkins and pears,  
plumbers and mummies  
and kettle drum drummers  
and plum jam (yum-yum jam)  
all over their chairs.

Sing me a song—  
but never you mind it!  
I've had enough  
of this nonsense. Don't cry.  
Criers and fliers  
and onion ring fryers—  
It's more than I want to put up with!  
Good-by!

*N. M. Bodecker*



## Clickbeetle



Click beetle  
Clack beetle  
Snapjack black beetle  
Glint glitter glare beetle  
Pin it in your hair beetle  
Tack it to your shawl beetle  
Wear it at the ball beetle  
Shine shimmer spark beetle  
Glisten in the dark beetle  
Listen to it crack beetle  
Click beetle  
Clack beetle

*Mary Ann Hoberman*

## The Ptarmigan

The ptarmigan is strange,  
As strange as he can be;  
Never sits on ptelephone poles  
Or roosts upon a ptree.  
And the way he ptakes pto spelling  
Is the strangest thing pto me.

*Anonymous*





## The Modern Hiawatha

He killed the noble Mudjokivis;  
 With the skin he made him mittens,  
 Made them with the fur side inside,  
 Made them with the skin side outside,  
 He, to get the warm side inside,  
 Put the inside skin side outside:  
 He, to get the cold side outside,  
 Put the warm side fur side inside:  
 That's why he put the fur side inside,  
 Why he put the skin side outside,  
 Why he turned them inside outside.

*George A. Strong*

## Misnomer

If you've ever been one  
 you know that  
 you don't sit the baby,  
 you bouncer  
 stander  
 holder  
 halter  
 puller  
 patter  
 rocker  
 feeder  
 burper  
 changer  
 kisser  
 bedder

*Eve Merriam*

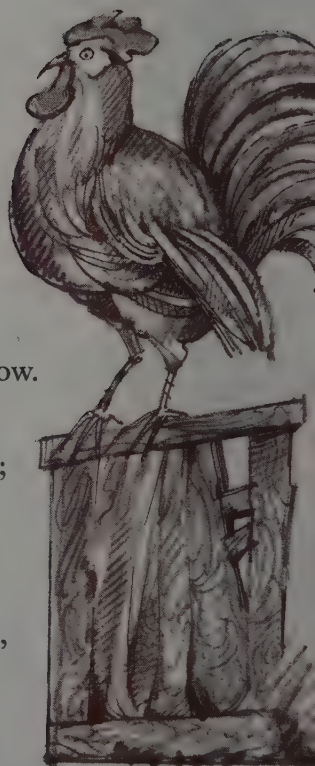
## To Be or Not To Be

I sometimes think I'd rather crow  
 And be a rooster than to roost  
 And be a crow. But I dunno.

A rooster he can roost also,  
 Which don't seem fair when crows can't crow.  
 Which may help, some. Still I dunno.

Crows should be glad of one thing, though;  
 Nobody thinks of eating crow,  
 While roosters they are good enough  
 For anyone unless they're tough.

There are lots of tough old roosters though,  
 And anyway a crow can't crow,  
 So mebbey roosters stand more show.  
 It looks that way. But I dunno.



*Anonymous*



## Wild Flowers

"Of what are you afraid, my child?" inquired the kindly teacher.  
 "Oh, sir! the flowers, they are wild," replied the timid creature.

*Peter Newell*

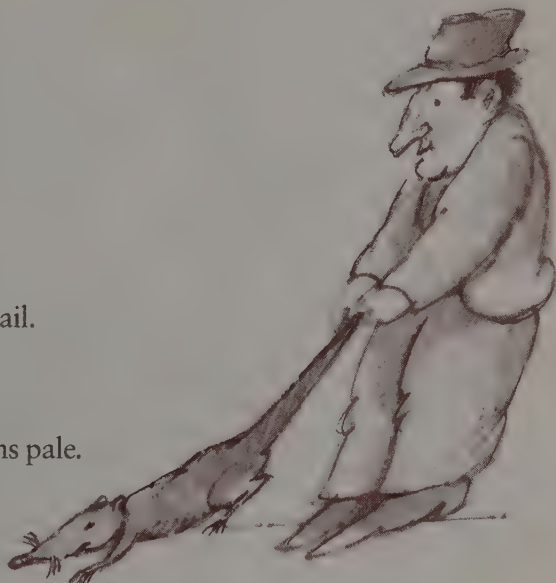
## Don't Ever Seize a Weasel by the Tail

You should never squeeze a weasel  
 for you might displease the weasel,  
 and don't ever seize a weasel by the tail.

Let his tail blow in the breeze;  
 if you pull it, he will sneeze,  
 for the weasel's constitution tends to be a little frail.

Yes the weasel wheezes easily;  
 the weasel freezes easily;  
 the weasel's tan complexion rather suddenly turns pale.

So don't displease or tease a weasel,  
 squeeze or freeze or wheeze a weasel  
 and don't ever seize a weasel by the tail.



*Jack Prelutsky*



## Have You Ever Seen?

Have you ever seen a sheet on a river bed?  
 Or a single hair from a hammer's head?  
 Has the foot of a mountain any toes?  
 And is there a pair of garden hose?

Does the needle ever wink its eye?  
 Why doesn't the wing of a building fly?  
 Can you tickle the ribs of a parasol?  
 Or open the trunk of a tree at all?

Are the teeth of a rake ever going to bite?  
 Have the hands of a clock any left or right?  
 Can the garden plot be deep and dark?  
 And what is the sound of the birch's bark?

*Anonymous*

## An Atrocious Pun

A major, with wonderful force,  
 Called out in Hyde Park for a horse.  
 All the flowers looked round,  
 But no horse could be found,  
 So he just rhododendron, of course.

*Anonymous*

## Waiters

Dining with his older daughter  
 Dad forgot to order water.  
 Daughter quickly called the waiter.  
 Waiter said he'd bring it later.  
 So she waited, did the daughter,  
 Till the waiter brought her water.  
 When he poured it for her later,  
 Which one would you call the waiter?

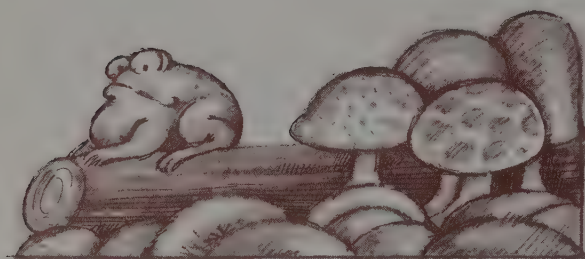
*Mary Ann Hoberman*



## J's the Jumping Jay-Walker

J's the jumping Jay-walker,  
 A sort of human jeep.  
 He crosses where the lights are red.  
 Before he looks, he'll leap!  
 Then many a wheel  
 Begins to squeal,  
 And many a brake to slam.  
 He turns your knees to jelly  
 And the traffic into jam.

*Phyllis McGinley*



## Poetry

What is Poetry? Who knows?  
 Not a rose, but the scent of the rose;  
 Not the sky, but the light in the sky;  
 Not the fly, but the gleam of the fly;  
 Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;  
 Not myself, but what makes me  
 See, hear, and feel something that prose  
 Cannot: and what it is, who knows?

*Eleanor Farjeon*



## Lumps

Humps are lumps  
 and so are mumps.

Bumps make lumps  
 on heads.

Mushrooms grow  
 in clumps of lumps—  
 on clumps of stumps,  
 in woods and dumps.

Springs spring lumps  
 in beds.

Mosquito bites  
 make itchy lumps.

Frogs on logs  
 make twitchy lumps.

*Judith Thurman*

## A Word

A word is dead  
 When it is said,  
 Some say.

I say it just  
 Begins to live  
 That day.

*Emily Dickinson*



## The Yak

Yickity-yackity, yickity-yak,  
the yak has a scriffily, scraffily back;  
some yaks are brown yaks and some yaks are black,  
yickity-yackity, yickity-yak.

Sniggildy-snaggildy, sniggildy-snog,  
the yak is all covered with shiggildy-shag;  
he walks with a ziggildy-zaggildy-zag,  
sniggildy-snaggildy, sniggildy-snog.

Yickity-yackity, yickity-yak,  
the yak has a scriffily, scraffily back;  
some yaks are brown and some yaks are black,  
yickity-yackity, yickity-yak.

*Jack Prelutsky*

## Feelings About Words

Some words clink  
As ice in drink.  
Some move with grace  
A dance, a lace.  
Some sound thin:  
Wail, scream and pin.  
Some words are squat:  
A mug, a pot,  
And some are plump,  
Fat, round and dump.  
Some words are light:  
Drift, lift and bright.  
A few are small:  
A, is and all.  
And some are thick,  
Glue, paste and brick.  
Some words are sad:  
"I never had. . . ."  
And others gay:  
Joy, spin and play.  
Some words are sick:  
Stab, scratch and nick.  
Some words are hot:  
Fire, flame and shot.  
Some words are sharp,  
Sword, point and carp.  
And some alert:  
Glint, glance and flirt.  
Some words are lazy:  
Saunter, hazy.  
And some words preen:  
Pride, pomp and queen.  
Some words are quick,  
A jerk, a flick.  
Some words are slow:  
Lag, stop and grow,  
While others poke  
As ox with yoke.  
Some words can fly—  
There's wind, there's high;  
And some words cry:  
"Goodbye . . .  
Goodbye. . . ."

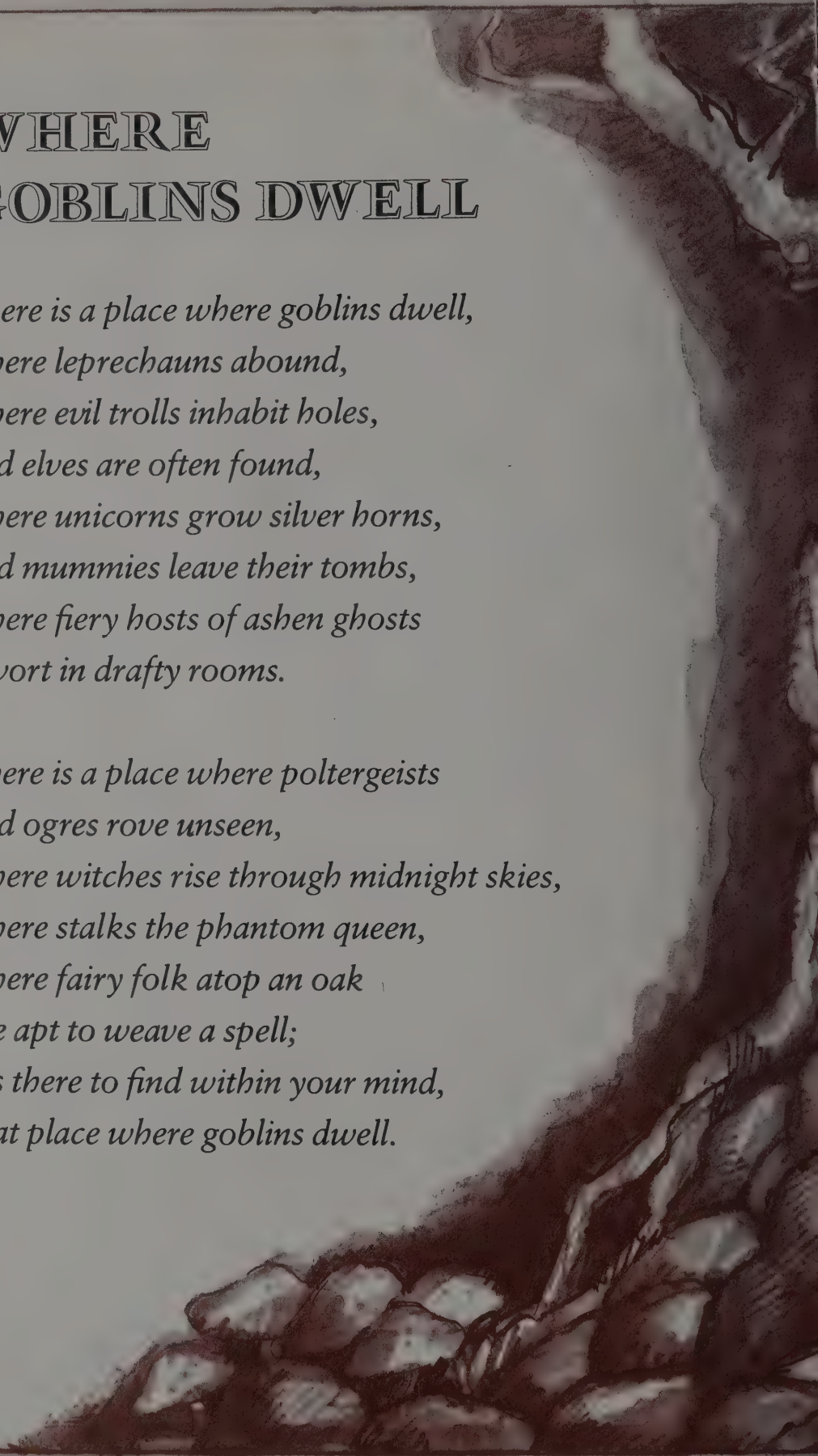
*Mary O'Neill*



# WHERE GOBLINS DWELL

*There is a place where goblins dwell,  
where leprechauns abound,  
where evil trolls inhabit holes,  
and elves are often found,  
where unicorns grow silver horns,  
and mummies leave their tombs,  
where fiery hosts of ashen ghosts  
cavort in drafty rooms.*

*There is a place where poltergeists  
and ogres rove unseen,  
where witches rise through midnight skies,  
where stalks the phantom queen,  
where fairy folk atop an oak  
are apt to weave a spell;  
it's there to find within your mind,  
that place where goblins dwell.*



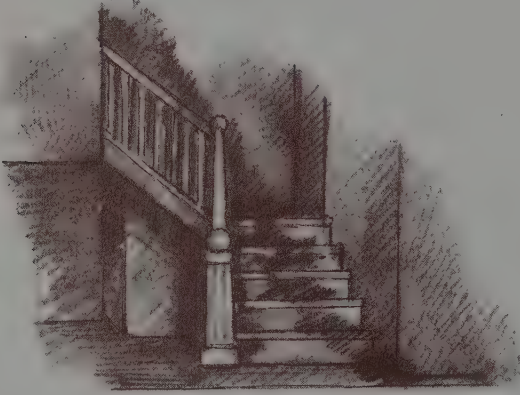




## Some One

Some one came knocking  
 At my wee, small door;  
 Some one came knocking,  
 I'm sure—sure—sure;  
 I listened, I opened,  
 I looked to left and right,  
 But naught there was a-stirring  
 In the still dark night;  
 Only the busy beetle  
 Tap-tapping in the wall,  
 Only from the forest  
 The screech-owl's call,  
 Only the cricket whistling  
 While the dewdrops fall,  
 So I know not who came knocking,  
 At all, at all, at all.

*Walter de la Mare*



## Ghosts

A cold and starry darkness moans  
 And settles wide and still  
 Over a jumble of tumbled stones  
 Dark on a darker hill.  
 An owl among those shadowy walls,  
 Gray against the gray  
 Of ruins and brittle weeds, calls  
 And soundless swoops away.  
 Rustling over scattered stones  
 Dancers hover and sway,  
 Drifting among their own bones  
 Like webs of the Milky Way.

*Harry Behn*



## Something Is There

Something is there  
 there on the stair  
 coming down  
 coming down  
 stepping with care.  
 Coming down  
 coming down  
 slinkety-sly.

Something is coming and wants to get by

*Lilian Moore*

## The Horseman

I heard a horseman  
 Ride over the hill;  
 The moon shone clear,  
 The night was still;  
 His helm was silver,  
 And pale was he;  
 And the horse he rode  
 Was of ivory.

*Walter de la Mare*



## Green Candles

"There's someone at the door," said gold candlestick:  
"Let her in quick, let her in quick!"

"There is a small hand groping at the handle.  
Why don't you turn it!" asked green candle.

"Don't go, don't go," said the Hepplewhite chair,  
"Lest you find a strange lady there."

"Yes, stay where you are," whispered the white wall:  
"There is nobody there at all."

"I know her little foot," gray carpet said:  
"Who but I should know her light tread?"  
"She shall come in," answered the open door,  
"And not," said the room, "go out anymore."

Humbert Wolfe

## hist whist

hist whist  
little ghostthings  
tip-toe  
twinkle-toe

little twitchy  
witches and tingling  
goblins

hob-a-nob hob-a-nob

little hoppy happy  
toad in tweeds  
tweeds  
little itchy mousies

with scuttling  
eyes rustle and run and  
hidehidehide  
whisk

whisk look out for the old woman  
with the wart on her nose  
what she'll do to yer  
nobody knows

for she knows the devil ooch  
the devil ouch  
the devil  
ach the great

green  
dancing  
devil  
devil  
devil  
devil

whееEEE

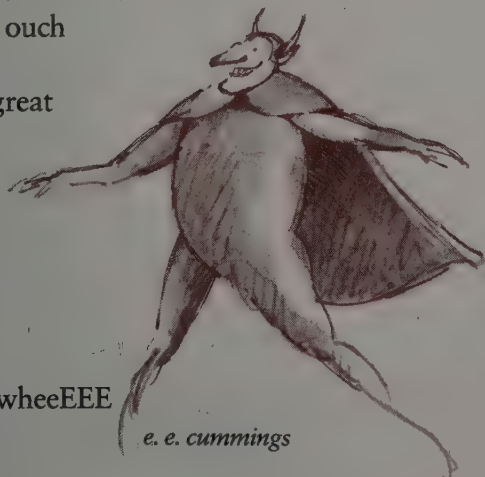
e. e. cummings



## What's That?

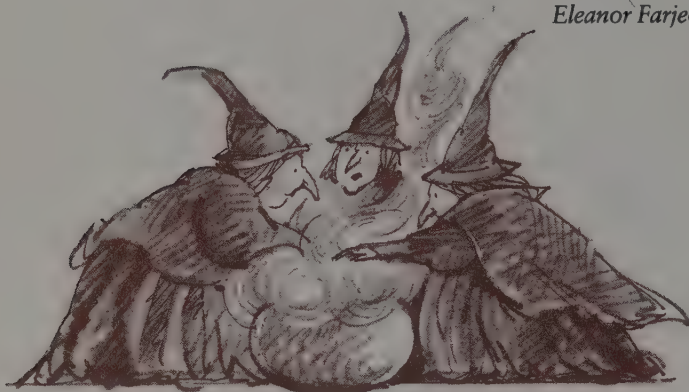
What's that?  
Who's there?  
There's a great huge horrible *horrible*  
creeping up the stair!  
A huge big terrible *terrible*  
with creepy crawly hair!  
There's a ghastly grisly *ghastly*  
with seven slimy eyes!  
And flabby grabby tentacles  
of a gigantic size!  
He's crept into my room now,  
he's leaning over me.  
I wonder if he's thinking  
how delicious I will be.

Florence Parry Heide



## The Witch! The Witch!

The Witch! the Witch! don't let her get you!  
Or your Aunt wouldn't know you the next time she met  
you!



*Eleanor Farjeon*



## Song of the Witches

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and caldron bubble.  
Fillet of a fenny snake,  
In the caldron boil and bake;  
Eye of newt and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and caldron bubble.  
Cool it with a baboon's blood,  
Then the charm is firm and good.

*Macbeth: IV. i. 10–19; 35–38*

*William Shakespeare*

## Owl

On Midsummer night the witches shriek,  
The frightened fairies swoon,  
The nightjar mutters in his sleep  
And ghosts around the chimney creep.  
The loud winds cry, the fir trees crash,  
And the owl stares at the moon.

*Sylvia Read*

## Wanted—A Witch's Cat

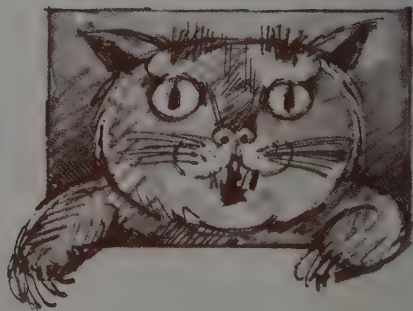
Wanted—a witch's cat.  
Must have vigor and spite,  
Be expert at hissing,  
And good in a fight,  
And have balance and poise  
On a broomstick at night.

Wanted—a witch's cat.  
Must have hypnotic eyes  
To tantalize victims  
And mesmerize spies,  
And be an adept  
At scanning the skies.

Wanted—a witch's cat,  
With a sly, cunning smile,  
A knowledge of spells  
And a good deal of guile,  
With a fairly hot temper  
And plenty of bile.

Wanted—a witch's cat,  
Who's not afraid to fly,  
For a cat with strong nerves  
The salary's high  
Wanted—a witch's cat;  
Only the best need apply.

*Shelagh McGee*





## Eight Witches

Eight witches rode the midnight sky.  
One wailed low, and one wailed high,  
Another croaked, another sighed  
Throughout the eerie midnight ride.

One witch's voice was cackly toned,  
Another shrieked, another moaned.  
The eighth, much younger than the rest,  
Made a scary sound the best—

Yoooo—

Yoooo—

Yoooo—

Yoooo—

## Queen Nefertiti

Spin a coin, spin a coin,  
All fall down;  
Queen Nefertiti  
Stalks through the town.

Over the pavements  
Her feet go clack  
Her legs are as tall  
As a chimney stack;

Her fingers flicker  
Like snakes in the air,  
The walls split open  
At her green-eyed stare;

Her voice is thin  
As the ghosts of bees;  
She will crumble your bones,  
She will make your blood freeze.

Spin a coin, spin a coin,  
All fall down;  
Queen Nefertiti  
Stalks through the town.

*Anonymous*

## Witches' Menu

Live lizard; dead lizard  
Marinated; fried.  
Poached lizard; pickled lizard  
Salty lizard hide.

Hot lizard, cold lizard  
Lizard over ice.  
Baked lizard, boiled lizard  
Lizard served with spice.

Sweet lizard, sour lizard  
Smoked lizard heart.  
Leg of lizard, loin of lizard  
Lizard a la carte.

*Sonja Nikolay*



## Colonel Fazackerley

Colonel Fazackerley Butterworth-Toast  
Bought an old castle complete with a ghost,  
But someone or other forgot to declare  
To Colonel Fazack that the specter was there:

On the very first evening, while waiting to dine,  
The Colonel was taking a fine sherry wine,  
When the ghost, with a furious flash and a flare,  
Shot out of the chimney and shivered, "Beware!"

Colonel Fazackerley put down his glass  
And said, "My dear fellow, that's really first class!  
I just can't conceive how you do it at all.  
I imagine you're going to a Fancy Dress Ball?"

At this, the dread ghost gave a withering cry.  
Said the Colonel (his monocle firm in his eye),  
"Now just how you do it I wish I could think.  
Do sit down and tell me, and please have a drink."

The ghost in his phosphorous cloak gave a roar  
And floated about between ceiling and floor.  
He walked through a wall and returned through a pane  
And backed up the chimney and came down again.

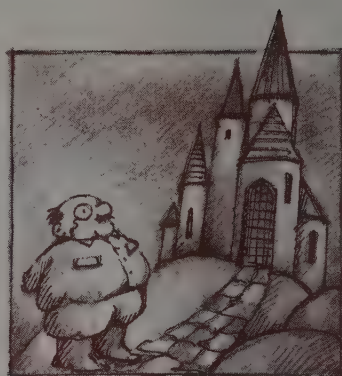
Said the Colonel, "With laughter I'm feeling quite weak!"  
(As trickles of merriment ran down his cheek).  
"My house-warming party I hope you won't spurn.  
You *must* say you'll come and you'll give us a turn!"

At this, the poor specter—quite out of his wits—  
Proceeded to shake himself almost to bits.  
He rattled his chains and he clattered his bones  
And he filled the whole castle with mumbles and moans.

But Colonel Fazackerley, just as before,  
Was simply delighted and called out, "Encore!"  
At which the ghost vanished, his efforts in vain,  
And never was seen at the castle again.

"Oh dear, what a pity!" said Colonel Fazack.  
"I don't know his name, so I can't call him back."  
And then with a smile that was hard to define,  
Colonel Fazackerley went in to dine.

Charles Causley





### Three Ghostesses

Three little ghostesses,  
Sitting on postesses,  
Eating buttered toastesses,  
Greasing their fistesses,  
Up to their wristesses,  
Oh, what beastesses  
To make such feastesses!

*Anonymous*

### Song of the Ogres

Little fellow, you're amusing,  
Stop before you end by losing

Your shirt:

Run along to Mother, Gus,  
Those who interfere with us  
Get hurt.

Honest Virtue, old wives prattle,  
Always wins the final battle.

Dear, Dear!

Life's exactly what it looks,  
Love may triumph in the books,  
Not here.

We're not joking, we assure you:  
Those who rode this way before you  
Died hard.

What? Still spoiling for a fight?  
Well, you've asked for it all right:  
On guard!

Always hopeful, aren't you? Don't be.  
Night is falling and it won't be

Long now:

You will never see the dawn,  
You will wish you'd not been born.  
And how!

*W. H. Auden*

### The Darkling Elves

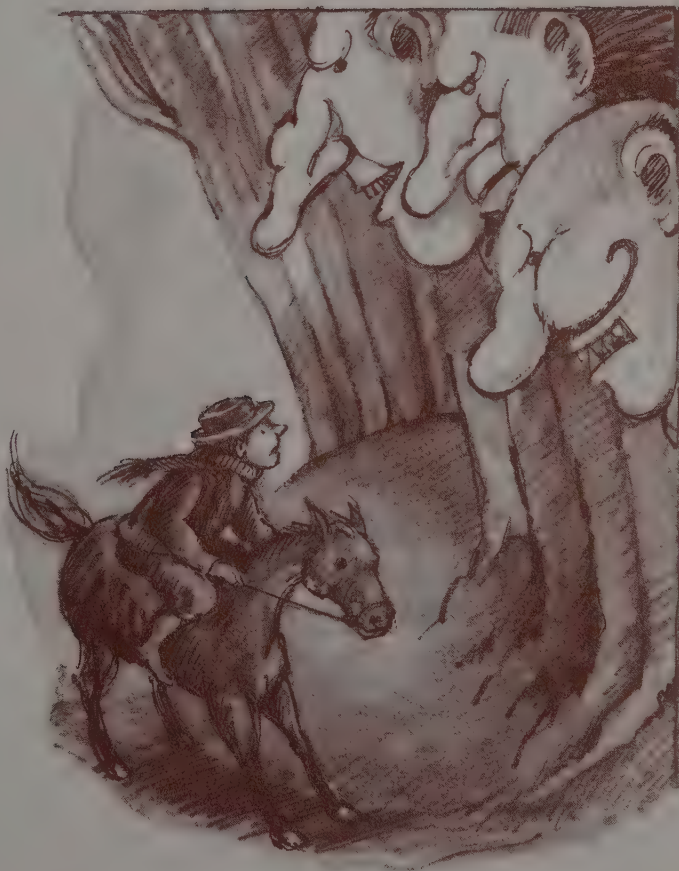
In wildest woods, on treetop shelves,  
sit evil beings with evil selves—  
they are the dreaded darkling elves  
and they are always hungry.

In garish garb of capes and hoods,  
they wait and watch within their woods  
to peel your flesh and steal your goods  
for they are always hungry.

Through brightest days and darkest nights  
these terrifying tiny sprites  
await to strike and take their bites  
for they are always hungry.

Watch every leaf of every tree,  
for once they pounce you cannot flee—  
their teeth are sharp as sharp can be . . .  
and they are always hungry.

*Jack Prelutsky*





## The Elf and the Dormouse

Under a toadstool  
Crept a wee Elf,  
Out of the rain  
To shelter himself.

Under the toadstool,  
Sound asleep,  
Sat a big Dormouse  
All in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf,  
Frightened, and yet  
Fearing to fly away  
Lest he get wet.

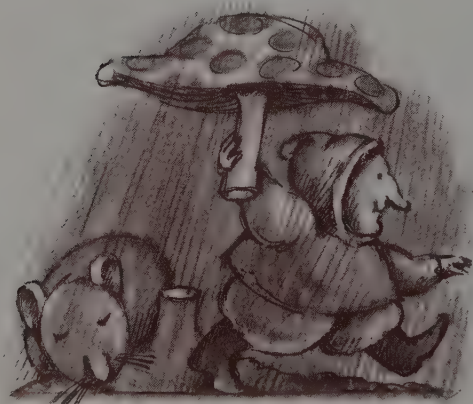
To the next shelter—  
Maybe a mile!  
Sudden the wee Elf  
Smiled a wee smile,

Tugged till the toadstool  
Toppled in two.  
Holding it over him  
Gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home  
Dry as could be.  
Soon woke the Dormouse—  
“Good gracious me!

Where is my toadstool?”  
Loud he lamented.  
—And that’s how umbrellas  
First were invented.

*Oliver Herford*



## The Bogeyman

In the desolate depths of a perilous place  
the bogeyman lurks, with a snarl on his face.  
Never dare, never dare to approach his dark lair  
for he’s waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

He skulks in the shadows, relentless and wild  
in his search for a tender, delectable child.  
With his steely sharp claws and his slaving jaws  
oh he’s waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

Many have entered his dreary domain  
but not even one has been heard from again.  
They no doubt made a feast for the butchering beast  
and he’s waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

In that sulphurous, sunless and sinister place  
he’ll crumple your bones in his bogey embrace.  
Never never go near if you hold your life dear,  
for oh! . . . what he’ll do . . . when he gets you!

*Jack Prelutsky*

## The Troll

Be wary of the loathsome troll  
that slyly lies in wait  
to drag you to his dingy hole  
and put you on his plate.

His blood is black and boiling hot,  
he gurgles ghastly groans.  
He’ll cook you in his dinner pot,  
your skin, your flesh, your bones.

He’ll catch your arms and clutch your legs  
and grind you to a pulp,  
then swallow you like scrambled eggs—  
gobble! gobble! gulp!

So watch your steps when next you go  
upon a pleasant stroll,  
or you might end in the pit below  
as supper for the troll.

*Jack Prelutsky*

## The Wendigo

The Wendigo,  
The Wendigo!  
Its eyes are ice and indigo!  
Its blood is rank and yellowish!  
Its voice is hoarse and bellowish!  
Its tentacles are slithery,  
And scummy,  
Slimy,  
Leathery!  
Its lips are hungry blubbery,  
And smacky,  
Sucky,  
Rubbery!

The Wendigo,  
The Wendigo!  
I saw it just a friend ago!  
Last night it lurked in Canada;  
Tonight, on your veranada!  
As you are lolling hammockwise  
It contemplates you stomachwise.  
You loll,  
It contemplates,  
It lollops.  
The rest is merely gulps and gollops.

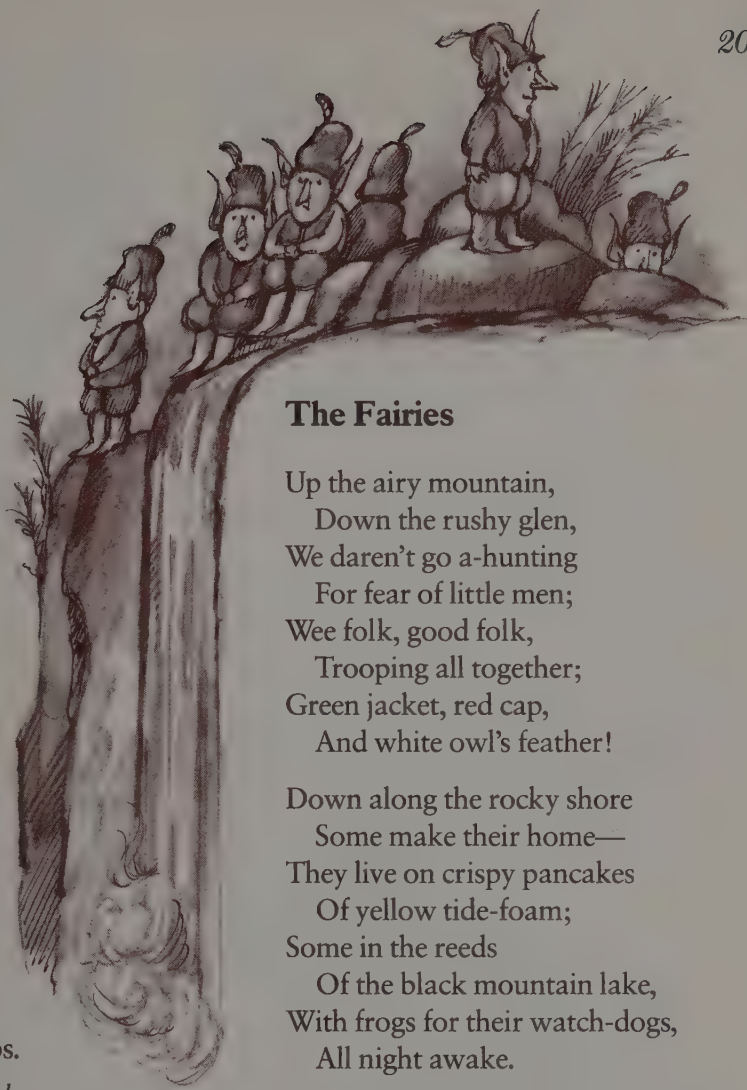
*Ogden Nash*

## Father and Mother

My father's name is Frankenstein,  
He comes from the Barbados.  
He fashioned me from package twine  
And instant mashed potatoes.

My mother's name is Draculeen,  
She lets a big bat bite her,  
And folks who sleep here overnight  
Wake up a few quarts lighter.

*X. J. Kennedy*



## The Fairies

Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen,  
We daren't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men;  
Wee folk, good folk,  
Trooping all together;  
Green jacket, red cap,  
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore  
Some make their home—  
They live on crispy pancakes  
Of yellow tide-foam;  
Some in the reeds  
Of the black mountain lake,  
With frogs for their watch-dogs,  
All night awake.

By the craggy hillside,  
Through the mosses bare,  
They have planted thorn-trees  
For pleasure here and there.  
Is any man so daring  
As dig one up in spite,  
He shall find their sharpest thorns  
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen,  
We daren't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men;  
Wee folk, good folk,  
Trooping all together;  
Green jacket, red cap,  
And white owl's feather!

*William Allingham*



## The Great Auk's Ghost

The Great Auk's ghost rose on one leg,  
Sighed thrice and three times winked,  
And turned and poached a phantom egg,  
And muttered, "I'm extinct."

*Ralph Hodgson*

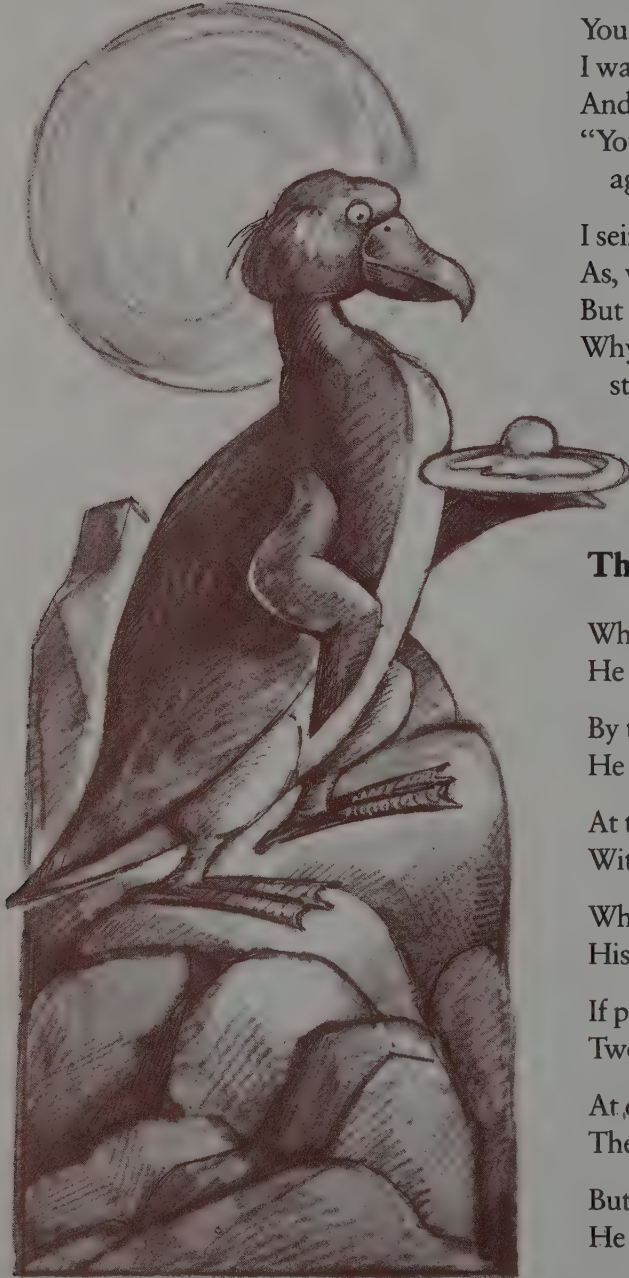


## The Pumpkin

You may not believe it, for hardly could I:  
I was cutting a pumpkin to put in a pie,  
And on it was written in letters most plain  
"You may hack me in slices, but I'll grow  
again."

I seized it and sliced it and made no mistake  
As, with dough rounded over, I put it to bake:  
But soon in the garden as I chanced to walk,  
Why, there was that pumpkin entire on his  
stalk!

*Robert Graves*



## The Seven Ages of Elf-hood

When an Elf is as old as a year and a minute  
He can wear a cap with a feather in it.

By the time that he is two times two  
He has a buckle for either shoe.

At twenty he is fine as a fiddle,  
With a little brown belt to go round his middle.

When he's lived for fifty years or so  
His coat may have buttons all in a row.

If past three score and ten he's grown  
Two pockets he has for his very own.

At eighty-two or three years old  
They bulge and jingle with bits of gold.

But when he's a hundred and a day  
He gets a little pipe to play!

*Rachel Field*



## Slithergadee

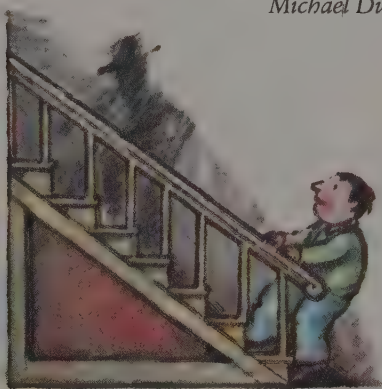
The Slithergadee has crawled out of the sea.  
He may catch all the others, but he won't catch me.  
No you won't catch me, old Slithergadee,  
You may catch all the others, but you wo——

*Shel Silverstein*

## Gumble

The Gumble lives behind the door;  
At night he's oft inclined to snore,  
Waking me in such a fright  
I leap from bed, turn on the light,  
And clad in dressing gown and slippers  
Drag out the Gumble by his flippers,  
Admonish him with such a smack  
He first turns blue and then turns black,  
While I, ashamed at what I've done,  
Go back to bed and count to one  
Thousand and three Gumblish sheep  
In vain attempt to go to sleep,  
While Gumble sniggers, "Serves him right,  
I hope he's kept awake all night."

*Michael Dugan*



## The Little Man

As I was walking up the stair  
I met a man who wasn't there;  
He wasn't there again today.  
I wish, I wish he'd stay away.

*Hughes Mearns*

## How to Tell Goblins from Elves

The Goblin has a wider mouth  
Than any wondering elf.  
The saddest part of this is that  
He brings it on himself.  
For hanging in a willow clump  
In baskets made of sheaves,  
You may see the baby goblins  
Under coverlets of leaves.  
  
They suck a pink and podgy foot  
(As human babies do),  
And then they suck the other one,  
Until they're sucking two.  
And so it is that goblins' mouths  
Keep growing very round.  
So you can't mistake a goblin,  
When a goblin you have found.

*Monica Shannon*

## Unicorn

The Unicorn with the long white horn  
Is beautiful and wild.  
He gallops across the forest green  
So quickly that he's seldom seen  
Where Peacocks their blue feathers preen  
And strawberries grow wild.  
He flees the hunter and the hounds,  
Upon black earth his white hoof pounds,  
Over cold mountain streams he bounds  
And comes to a meadow mild;  
There, when he kneels to take his nap,  
He lays his head in a lady's lap  
As gently as a child.

*William Jay Smith*

## The Bogus-Boo

The Bogus-boo  
Is a creature who  
Comes out at night—and why?  
He likes the air;  
He likes to scare  
The nervous passer-by.

Out from the park  
At dead of dark  
He comes with huffling pad.  
If, when alone,  
You hear his moan,  
'Tis like to drive you mad.

He has two wings,  
Pathetic things,  
With which he cannot fly.  
His tusks look fierce,  
Yet could not pierce  
The merest butterfly.

He has six ears,  
But what he hears  
Is very faint and small;  
And with the claws  
On his eight paws  
He cannot scratch at all.

He looks so wise  
With his owl-eyes,  
His aspect grim and ghoulish;  
But truth to tell,  
He sees not well  
And is distinctly foolish.

This Bogus-boo,  
What can he do  
But huffle in the dark?  
So don't take fright;  
He has no bite  
And very little bark.

*James Reeves*



## Wrinkles

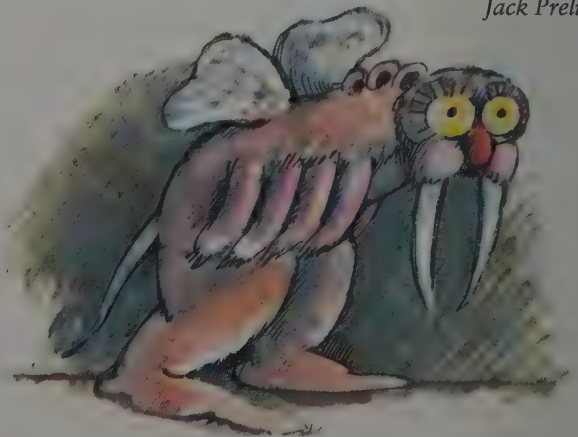
When the clock strikes five but it's only four,  
there's a wrinkle in your clock.  
When your key won't work in your own front door,  
there's a wrinkle in the lock.

When your brand-new shoes refuse to fit,  
there's a wrinkle in each shoe.  
When the lights go out and they just were lit,  
that's a wrinkle's doing too.

When you shake and shake but the salt won't pour,  
there's a wrinkle in the salt.  
When your cake falls flat on the kitchen floor,  
it's surely a wrinkle's fault.

The way to fix these irksome works  
is obvious and simple.  
Just search and find it where it lurks,  
and then . . . remove the wrinkle.

*Jack Prelutsky*







### **Ms. Whatchamacallit Thingamajig**

Ms. Whatchamacallit Thingamajig  
can make herself small or make herself big,  
can take any shape, from round as a ball  
to sharp as a spear, to wide as a wall.

She makes no sound as she creeps, flies or shakes  
(how she moves depends on the shape that she takes).  
And though she is soundless, she's always around.  
Wherever you are—there she can be found.

What? You've never seen her? That's because she's  
invisible by day and disguised as a breeze.  
At night, when the lights are out in the house,  
she takes on the shape of a shadow or mouse.

Though you've never seen her, she's always close by.  
Have you never felt something fly in your eye?  
Or noticed the cat stare at someone unseen?  
Or found dirt on a shirt that was utterly clean?

Have you ever been pushed and found no one there?  
Or dropped a glass you were holding with care?  
What of itches, tickles, scratches and those?  
Are they all just—accidents—do you suppose?

You have the idea. You're beginning to see.  
Yes, those are the doings of Ms. W. T.  
She loves a good laugh, and laughs without end  
to see a look of surprise on the face of a friend.

*Miriam Chaikin*

### **The Spangled Pandemonium**

The Spangled Pandemonium  
Is missing from the zoo.  
He bent the bars the barest bit,  
And slithered glibly through.

He crawled across the moated wall,  
He climbed the mango tree,  
And when his keeper scrambled up,  
He nipped him in the knee.

To all of you, a warning  
Not to wander after dark,  
Or if you must, make very sure  
You stay out of the park.

For the Spangled Pandemonium  
Is missing from the zoo,  
And since he nipped his keeper,  
He would just as soon nip you!

*Palmer Brown*



## The Creature in the Classroom

It appeared inside our classroom  
at a quarter after ten,  
it gobbled up the blackboard,  
three erasers and a pen.  
It gobbled teacher's apple  
and it bopped her with the core.  
"How dare you!" she responded.  
"You must leave us . . . there's the door."

The Creature didn't listen  
but described an arabesque  
as it gobbled all her pencils,  
seven notebooks and her desk.  
Teacher stated very calmly,  
"Sir! You simply cannot stay,  
I'll report you to the principal  
unless you go away!"

But the thing continued eating,  
it ate paper, swallowed ink,  
as it gobbled up our homework  
I believe I saw it wink.  
Teacher finally lost her temper.  
"OUT!" she shouted at the creature.  
The creature hopped beside her  
and GLOPP . . . it swallowed teacher.

*Jack Prelutsky*



## Dinky

O what's the weather in a Beard?  
It's windy there, and rather weird,  
And when you think the sky has cleared  
—Why, there is Dirty Dinky.

Suppose you walk out in a Storm,  
With nothing on to keep you warm,  
And then step barefoot on a Worm  
—Of course, it's Dirty Dinky.

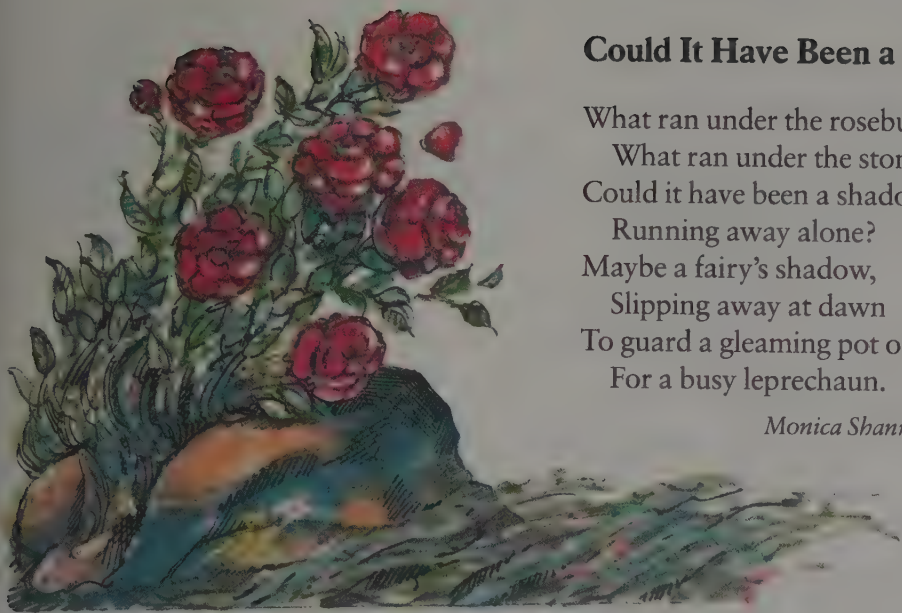
As I was crossing a hot hot Plain,  
I saw a sight that caused me pain,  
You asked me before,  
I'll tell you again:  
—It *looked* like Dirty Dinky.

Last night you lay a-sleeping?  
No! The room was thirty-five below;  
The sheets and blankets turned to snow.  
—He'd got in: Dirty Dinky.

You'd better watch the things you do,  
You'd better watch the things you do.  
You're part of him; he's part of you  
—*You* may be Dirty Dinky.

*Theodore Roethke*





## Could It Have Been a Shadow?

What ran under the rosebush?  
 What ran under the stone?  
 Could it have been a shadow,  
 Running away alone?  
 Maybe a fairy's shadow,  
 Slipping away at dawn  
 To guard a gleaming pot of gold  
 For a busy leprechaun.

Monica Shannon

## The Plumpuppets

When little heads weary have gone to their bed,  
 When all the good nights and the prayers have been said,  
 Of all the good fairies that send bairns to rest  
 The little Plumpuppets are those I love best.

*If your pillow is lumpy, or hot, thin and flat,  
 The little Plumpuppets know just what they're at;  
 They plump up the pillow, all soft, cool and fat—  
 The little Plumpuppets plump-up it!*

The little Plumpuppets are fairies of beds;  
 They have nothing to do but to watch sleepy heads;  
 They turn down the sheets and they tuck you in tight,  
 And they dance on your pillow to wish you good night!

No matter what troubles have bothered the day,  
 Though your doll broke her arm or the pup ran away;  
 Though your handies are black with the ink that was spilt—  
 Plumpuppets are waiting in blankets and quilt.

*If your pillow is lumpy, or hot, thin and flat,  
 The little Plumpuppets know just what they're at;  
 They plump up the pillow; all soft, cool and fat—  
 The little Plumpuppets plump-up it!*

Christopher Morley









## THE LAND OF POTPOURRI

*Oh, take my hand and stroll with me  
into the Land of Potpourri,  
a land to think, a land to dream,  
a land of peaches topped with cream,  
of orange crayons, yellow pears,  
a wind-up frog upon the stairs,  
a windy beach, a flying bed,  
a helicopter overhead.*

*In Potpourri you're sure to spy  
a locomotive clacking by,  
a toaster pop, a rocket roar,  
a shovel like a dinosaur,  
a puzzled mouse in outer space,  
a breathless theft of second base;  
so take my hand and stroll with me  
into the Land of Potpourri.*

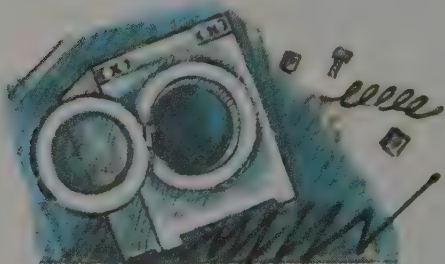




## Our Washing Machine

Our washing machine went whisity whirr  
 Whisity whisity whisity whirr  
 One day at noon it went whisity click  
 Whisity whisity whisity click  
 Click grr click grr click grr click  
 Call the repairman  
 Fix it . . . Quick!

*Patricia Hubbell*



## Steam Shovel

The dinosaurs are not all dead.  
 I saw one raise its iron head  
 To watch me walking down the road  
 Beyond our house today.  
 Its jaws were dripping with a load  
 Of earth and grass that it had cropped.  
 It must have heard me where I stopped,  
 Snorted white steam my way,  
 And stretched its long neck out to see,  
 And chewed, and grinned quite amiably.

*Charles Malam*

## Happy Thought

The world is so full of a number of things,  
 I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

## Introduction to Songs of Innocence

Piping down the valleys wild,  
 Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
 On a cloud I saw a child,  
 And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"  
 So I piped with merry cheer.  
 "Piper, pipe that song again";  
 So I piped; he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;  
 Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"  
 So I sang the same again,  
 While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write  
 In a book, that all may read."  
 So he vanished from my sight;  
 And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
 And I stained the water clear,  
 And I wrote my happy songs  
 Every child may joy to hear.

*William Blake*

## No Holes Marred

For printed instructions  
 I had a great regard,  
 Until, in the mail,  
 Came an IBM card  
 With a written command  
 Not to crease it or fold it,  
 And a stamped, return envelope—  
 Too small to hold it.

*Suzanne Douglass*



## From: The Bed Book

*These* are the Beds  
for me and for you!  
These are the Beds  
to climb into:

Pocket-size Beds  
and Beds for Snacks,  
Tank Beds, Beds  
on Elephant Backs,  
Beds that fly,  
or go under water,  
Bouncy Beds, Beds  
you can spatter and spotter,  
Bird-Watching Beds,  
Beds for Zero Weather—  
*any* kind of Bed  
as long as it's rather  
special and queer  
and full of surprises,

Beds of amazing  
shapes and sizes—  
NOT just a white little  
tucked-in-tight little  
nighty-night little  
turn-out-the-light little  
bed!

*Sylvia Plath*

## The Toaster

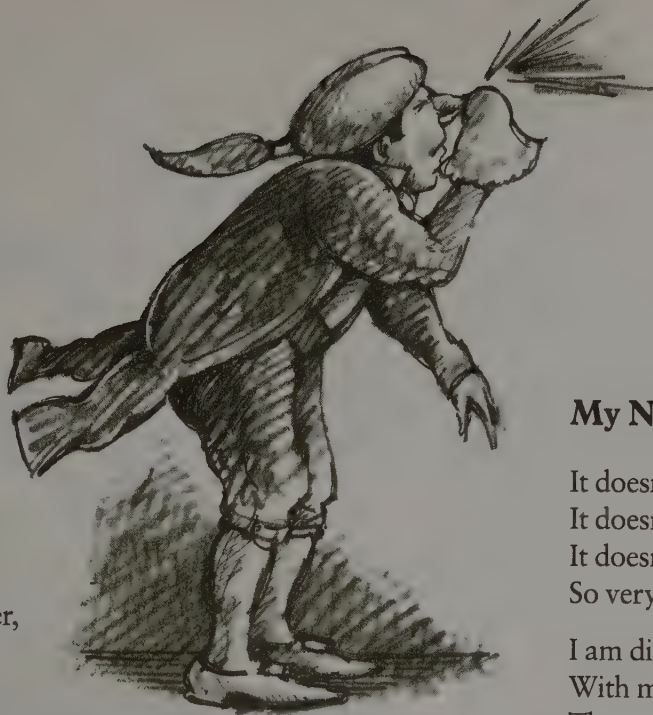
A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming red  
Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread.  
I hand him fat slices, and then, one by one,  
He hands them back when he sees they are done.

*William Jay Smith*

## The Tin Frog

I have hopped, when properly wound up, the whole length  
Of the hallway; once hopped halfway down the stairs, and fell.  
Since then the two halves of my tin have been awry; my strength  
Is not quite what it used to be; I do not hop so well.

*Russell Hoban*



## My Nose

It doesn't breathe;  
It doesn't smell;  
It doesn't feel  
So very well.

I am discouraged  
With my nose:  
The only thing it  
Does is blows.

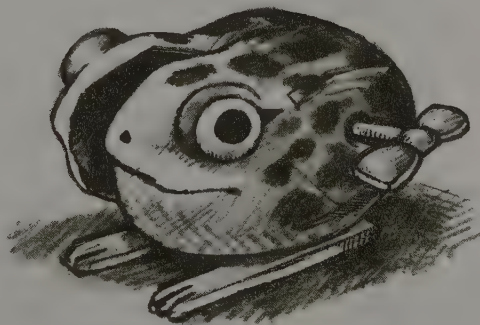
*Dorothy Aldis*

## Driving to the Beach

On the road  
smell fumes and tar  
through the windows  
of the car.

But at the beach  
smell suntan lotion  
and wind  
and sun  
and ocean!

*Joanna Cole*



## Arithmetic

Arithmetic is where numbers fly  
like pigeons in and out of your head.  
Arithmetic tells you how many you lose or win  
if you know how many you had  
before you lost or won.

Arithmetic is seven eleven all good children  
go to heaven—or five six bundle of sticks.

Arithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your  
head to your hand to your pencil to your paper  
till you get the right answer. . . .

If you have two animal crackers, one good and one bad,  
and you eat one and a striped zebra  
with streaks all over him eats the other,  
how many animal crackers will you have  
if somebody offers you five six seven and you say  
No no no and you say Nay nay nay  
and you say Nix nix nix?

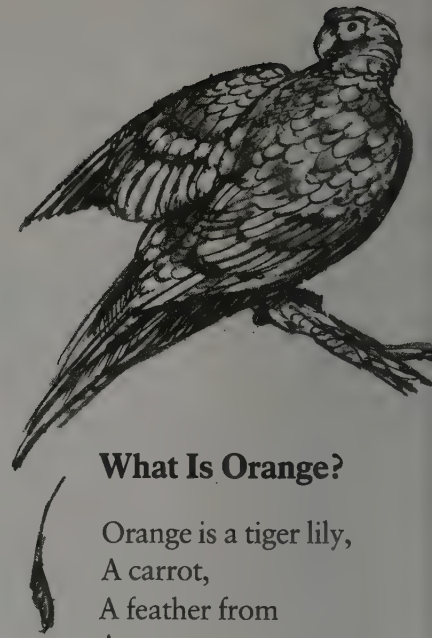
If you ask your mother for one fried egg  
for breakfast and she gives you  
two fried eggs and you eat  
both of them, who is better in arithmetic,  
you or your mother?

*Carl Sandburg*

## What Is Pink?

What is pink? A rose is pink  
By the fountain's brink.  
What is red? A poppy's red  
In its barley bed.  
What is blue? The sky is blue  
Where the clouds float through.  
What is white? A swan is white  
Sailing in the light.  
What is yellow? Pears are yellow,  
Rich and ripe and mellow.  
What is green? The grass is green,  
With small flowers between.  
What is violet? Clouds are violet  
In the summer twilight.  
What is orange? Why, an orange,  
Just an orange!

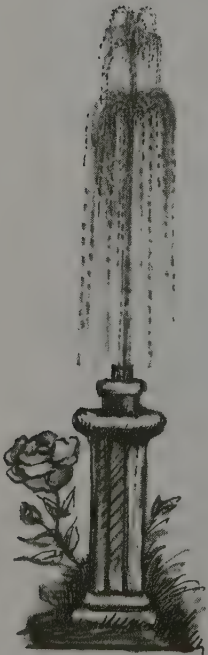
*Christina Rossetti*



## What Is Orange?

Orange is a tiger lily,  
A carrot,  
A feather from  
A parrot,  
A flame,  
The wildest color  
You can name.  
Orange is a happy day  
Saying good-by  
In a sunset that  
Shocks the sky.  
Orange is brave  
Orange is bold  
It's bittersweet  
And marigold.  
Orange is zip  
Orange is dash  
The brightest stripe  
In a Roman sash.  
Orange is an orange  
Also a mango  
Orange is music  
Of the tango.  
Orange is the fur  
Of the fiery fox,  
The brightest crayon  
In the box.  
And in the fall  
When the leaves are turning  
Orange is the smell  
Of a bonfire burning. . . .

*Mary O'Neill*



## Who's In

"The door is shut fast  
And everyone's out."  
But people don't know  
What they're talking about!  
Says the fly on the wall,  
And the flame on the coals  
And the dog on his rug  
And the mice in their holes,  
And the kitten curled up,  
And the spiders that spin—  
"What, everyone's out?  
Why, everyone's in!"

*Elizabeth Fleming*



## The Base Stealer

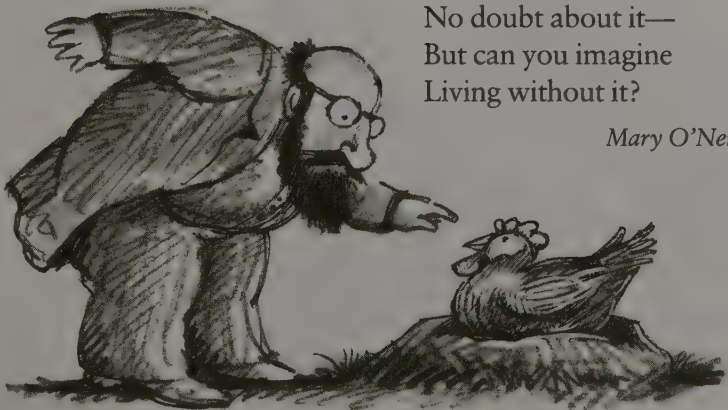
Poised between going on and back, pulled  
Both ways taut like a tightrope-walker,  
Fingertips pointing the opposites,  
Now bouncing tiptoe like a dropped ball  
Or a kid skipping rope, come on, come on,  
Running a scattering of steps sidewise,  
How he teeters, skitters, tingles, teases,  
Taunts them, hovers like an ecstatic bird,  
He's only flirting, crowd him, crowd him,  
Delicate, delicate, delicate—now!

*Robert Francis*

## To Be Answered in Our Next Issue

When a great tree falls  
And people aren't near,  
Does it make a noise  
If no one can hear?  
And which came first,  
The hen or the egg?  
This impractical question  
We ask and then beg.  
Some wise men say  
It's beyond their ken.  
Did anyone ever  
Ask the hen?

*Anonymous*



## What Is Red?

Red is a sunset  
Blazy and bright.  
Red is feeling brave  
With all your might.  
Red is a sunburn  
Spot on your nose,  
Sometimes red  
Is a red, red rose.  
Red squiggles out  
When you cut your hand.  
Red is a brick and  
A rubber band.  
Red is a hotness  
You get inside  
When you're embarrassed  
And want to hide.  
Fire-cracker, fire-engine  
Fire-flicker red—  
And when you're angry  
Red runs through your head.  
Red is an Indian,  
A Valentine heart,  
The trimming on  
A circus cart.  
Red is a lipstick,  
Red is a shout,  
Red is a signal  
That says: "Watch out!"  
Red is a great big  
Rubber ball.  
Red is the giant-est  
Color of all.  
Red is a show-off  
No doubt about it—  
But can you imagine  
Living without it?

*Mary O'Neill*





## A Football Game

It's the might, it's the fight  
 Of two teams who won't give in—  
 It's the roar of the crowd  
 And the "Go, fight, win!"

It's the bands, it's the stands,  
 It's the color everywhere.  
 It's the whiff, it's the sniff  
 Of the popcorn on the air.  
 It's a thrill, it's a chill,  
 It's a cheer and then a sigh;  
 It's that deep, breathless hush  
 When the ball soars high.

Yes, it's more than a score,  
 Or a desperate grasp at fame;  
 Fun is King, win or lose—  
 That's a football game!

*Alice Van Eck*



## Maps

High adventure  
 And bright dream—  
 Maps are mightier  
 Than they seem:

Ships that follow  
 Leaning stars—  
 Red and gold of  
 Strange bazaars—

Ice floes hid  
 Beyond all knowing—  
 Planes that ride where  
 Winds are blowing!

Train maps, maps of  
 Wind and weather,  
 Road maps—taken  
 Altogether

Maps are really  
 Magic wands  
 For home-staying  
 Vagabonds!

*Dorothy Brown Thompson*

## If Once You Have Slept on an Island

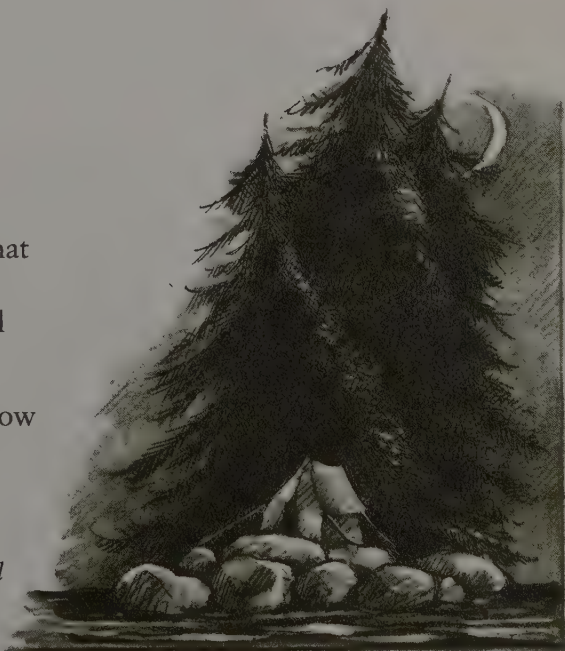
If once you have slept on an island  
 You'll never be quite the same;  
 You may look as you looked the day before  
 And go by the same old name,

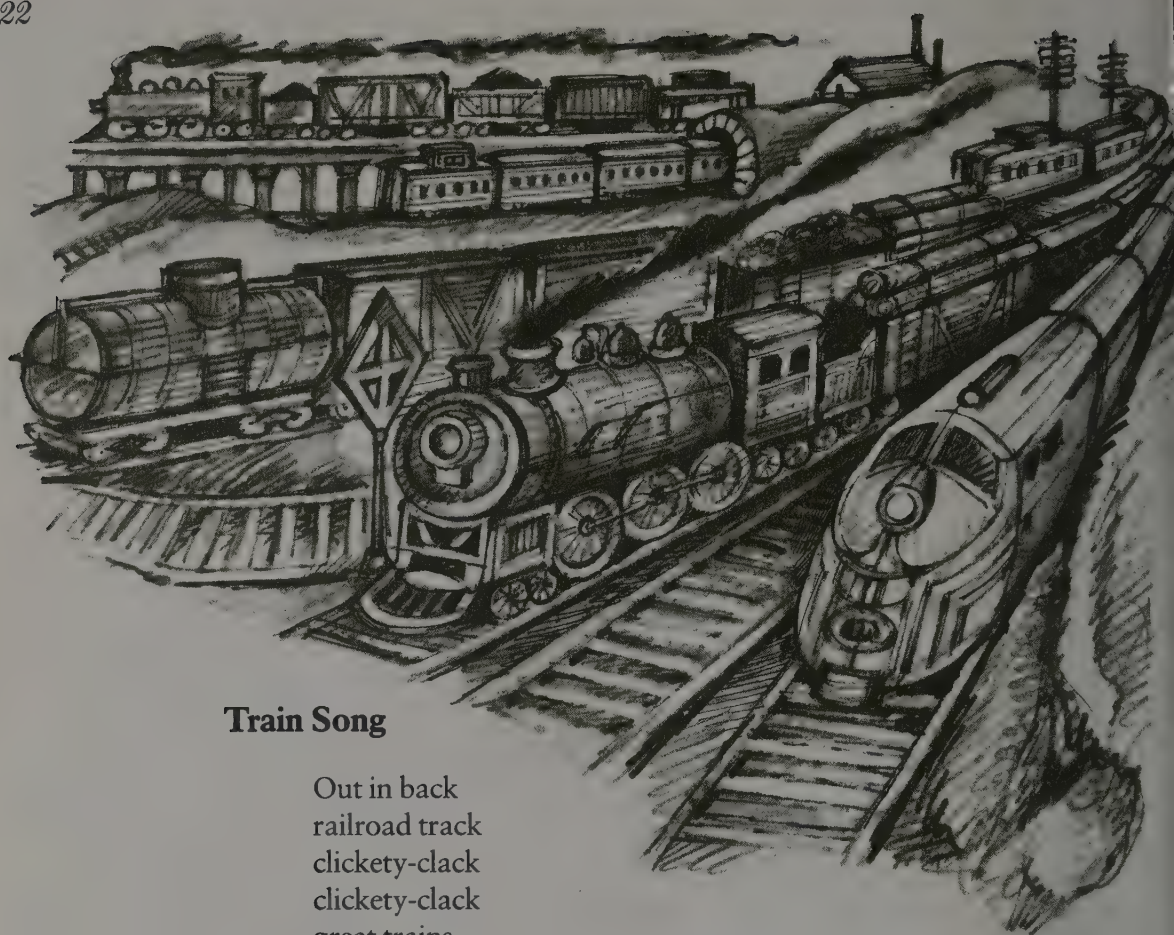
You may bustle about in street and shop;  
 You may sit at home and sew,  
 But you'll see blue water and wheeling gulls  
 Wherever your feet may go.

You may chat with the neighbors of this and that  
 And close to your fire keep,  
 But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse bell  
 And tides beat through your sleep.

Oh, you won't know why, and you can't say how  
 Such change upon you came,  
 But—once you have slept on an island  
 You'll never be quite the same!

*Rachel Field*





## Train Song

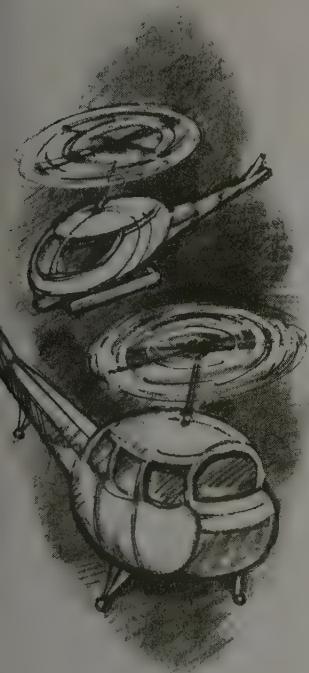
Out in back  
 railroad track  
 clickety-clack  
 clickety-clack  
 great trains  
 freight trains  
 talk about your late trains  
 the 509<sup>th</sup>  
 right on time  
 straight through to L.A.  
 whistle blows  
 there she goes  
 slicing through the day.  
 Trains with faces in a row  
 going places: Buffalo  
 New York City, Boston, Mass.  
 slowing 'neath the underpass  
 engineers with striped hats  
 head-of-the-line aristocrats  
 up in front, sitting high,  
 wave at me as they go by  
 Southern Route  
 Sante Fe  
 Cotton Belt  
 on their way  
 boxcars  
 flatcars

going-to-North Platte cars  
 grain trains  
 Maine trains  
 going-through-the-rain trains  
 long trains  
 strong trains  
 singing-clickety-song trains  
 cars with lumber  
 cars with cattle  
 clickety-clacking  
 to Seattle.  
 Detroit to Chicago  
 departing at five  
 whenever we get there  
 is when we arrive.  
 Midnight special  
 to Cheyenne  
 get a sleeper  
 if you can

ALL ABOARD! say good-bye  
 hear the railroad lullaby.

*Diane Siebert*





## Flight Plan

Of all the ways of traveling in earth and air and sea  
 It's the lively helicopter that has captivated me.  
 It hovers anywhere in air just like a hummingbird.  
 Flies backward; forward, up or down, whichever is preferred.  
 It doesn't pierce the stratosphere as zipping rockets do  
 Nor pop sound barriers and puff fat jet streams through the blue.  
 It isn't first in speed or weight or anything but fun  
 And deftly doing dangerous jobs that often must be done.  
 When anyone is lost in storm or flooded river's span  
 And other planes can't help at all, a helicopter can.  
 It lights on snow or mountaintop—wherever it is needed.  
 The plane that's like a hummingbird will not be superseded  
 By satellite or Stratojet. No supership has topped her.  
 And just as soon as ever I can I'll fly a helicopter!

*Jane Merchant*

## To an Aviator

You who have grown so intimate with stars  
 And know their silver dripping from your wings,  
 Swept with the breaking day across the sky,  
 Known kinship with each meteor that swings—

You who have touched the rainbow's fragile gold,  
 Carved lyric ways through dawn and dusk and rain  
 And soared to heights our hearts have only dreamed—  
 How can you walk earth's common ways again?

*Daniel Whitehead Hicky*

## Travel

The railroad track is miles away,  
 And the day is loud with voices speaking,  
 Yet there isn't a train goes by all day  
 But I hear its whistles shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,  
 Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming  
 But I see its cinders red on the sky  
 And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with the friends I make,  
 And better friends I'll not be knowing.  
 Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,  
 No matter where it's going.

*Edna St. Vincent Millay*





### Message from a Mouse, Ascending in a Rocket

Attention, architect!  
Attention, engineer!  
A message from mouse,  
Coming clear:

“Suggest installing  
Spike or sprocket  
Easily turned by  
A mouse in a rocket;  
An ejection gadget  
Simple to handle  
To free mouse quickly  
From this space-age ramble.  
Suggest packing  
For the next moon trip  
A mouse-sized parachute  
Somewhere in the ship,  
So I can descend  
(When my fear comes strong)  
Back to earth where I was born.  
Back to the cheerful world of cheese  
And small mice playing,  
And my wife waiting.”

*Patricia Hubbell*



### From a Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a battle,  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clammers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!

Here is a cart run away in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

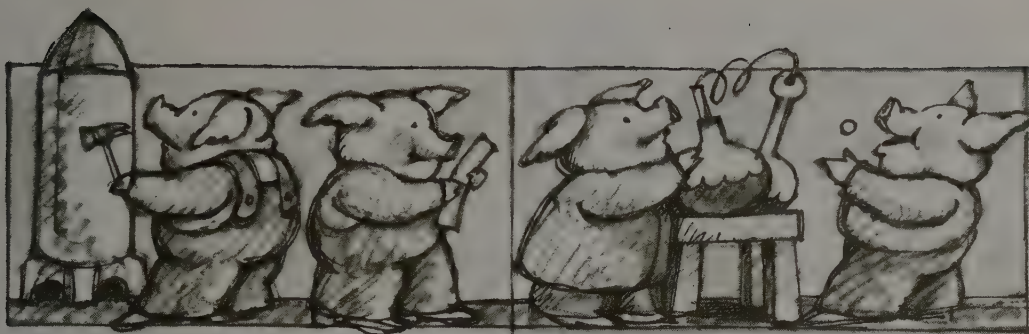
### The Toad

In days of old, those far off times  
Of high romance and magic,  
A toad was an enchanted prince,  
A transformation tragic.

Today the toad is studied as  
A scientific topic—  
No prince is found, although we look  
With vision microscopic.

And yet, the prince is there—he's there  
As clearly as can be.  
Forget your microscope, my friend,  
And use your mind to see!

*Robert S. Oliver*



## This Little Pig Built a Spaceship

This little pig built a spaceship,  
 This little pig paid the bill;  
 This little pig made isotopes,  
 This little pig ate a pill;  
 And this little pig did nothing at all,  
 But he's just a little pig still.

*Frederick Winsor*

## Dreams

Hold fast to dreams  
 For if dreams die  
 Life is a broken-winged bird  
 That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
 For when dreams go  
 Life is a barren field  
 Frozen with snow.

*Langston Hughes*

## How Strange It Is

In the sky  
 Soft clouds are blowing by.  
 Nothing more can I see  
 In the blue air over me.

Yet I know that planetoids and rocket cones,  
 Telstars studded with blue stones,  
 And many hundred bits of fins  
 And other man-made odds and ends  
 Are wheeling round me out in space  
 At a breathless astronautic pace.

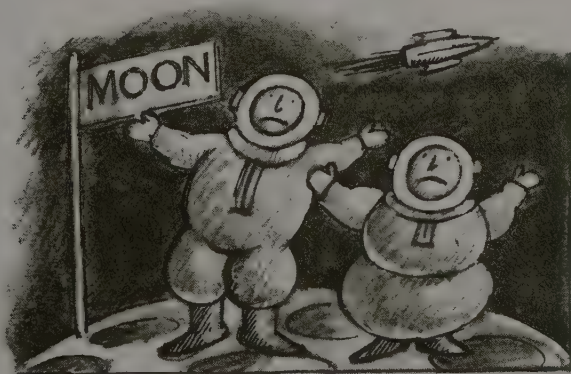
How strange it is to know  
 That while I watch the soft clouds blow  
 So many things I cannot see  
 Are passing by right over me.

*Claudia Lewis*

## Far Trek

Some things will never change although  
 We tour out to the stars;  
 Arriving on the moon we'll find  
 Our luggage sent to Mars!

*June Brady*







## The Paint Box

"Cobalt and umber and ultramarine,  
Ivory black and emerald green—  
What shall I paint to give pleasure to you?"

"Paint for me somebody utterly new."

"I have painted you tigers in crimson and white."

"The colors were good and you painted aright."

"I have painted the cook and a camel in blue  
And a panther in purple." "You painted them true.

"Now mix me a color that nobody knows,  
And paint me a country where nobody goes.  
And put in it people a little like you,  
Watching a unicorn drinking the dew."

*E. V. Rieu*

## Keep a Poem in Your Pocket

Keep a poem in your pocket  
and a picture in your head  
and you'll never feel lonely  
at night when you're in bed.

The little poem will sing to you  
the little picture bring to you  
a dozen dreams to dance to you  
at night when you're in bed.

So—

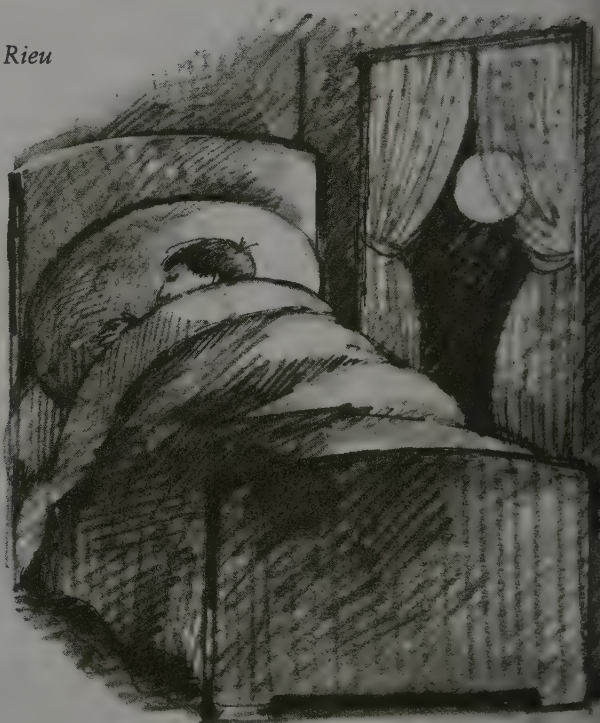
Keep a picture in your pocket  
and a poem in your head  
and you'll never feel lonely  
at night when you're in bed.

*Beatrice Schenk de Regniers*

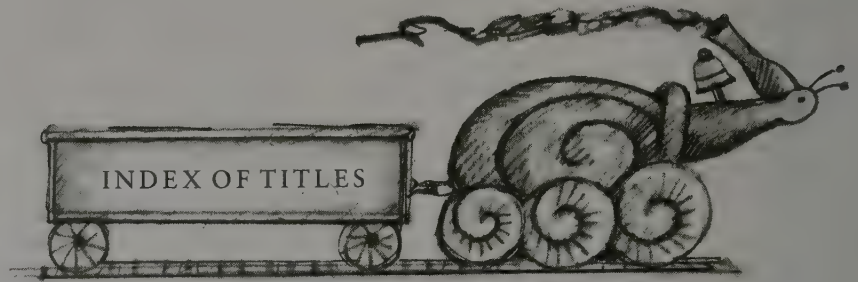
## To Dark Eyes Dreaming

Dreams go fast and far  
these days.  
They go by rocket thrust.  
They go arrayed  
in lights  
or in the dust of stars.  
Dreams, these days,  
go fast and far.  
Dreams are young, these days,  
or very old,  
They can be black  
or blue or gold.  
They need no special charts,  
nor any fuel.  
It seems, only one rule applies,  
to all our dreams—  
They will not fly except in open sky.  
A fenced-in dream  
will die.

*Zilpha Keatley Snyder*







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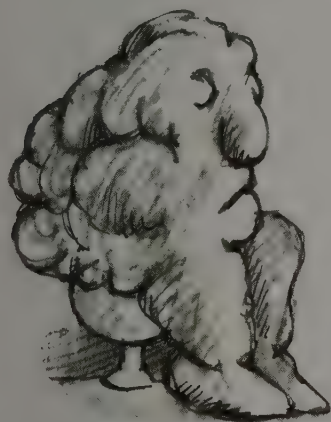
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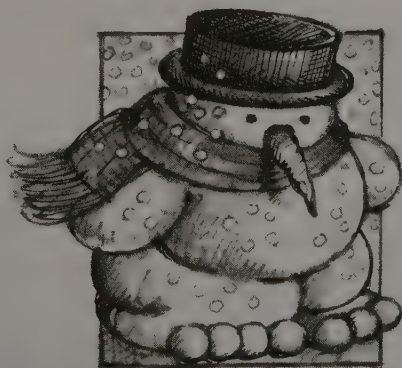


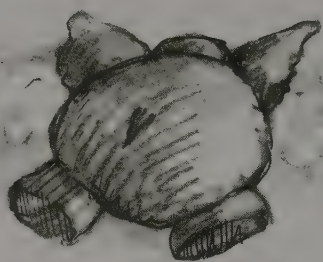
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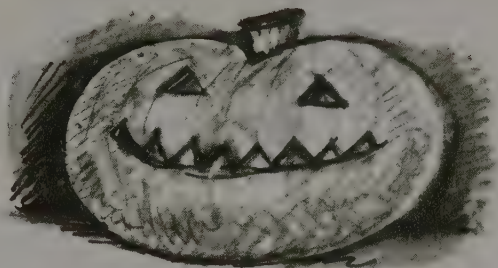


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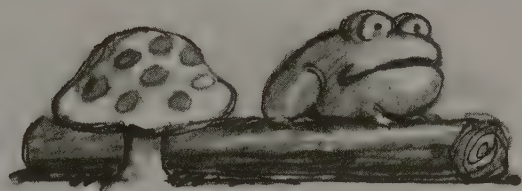
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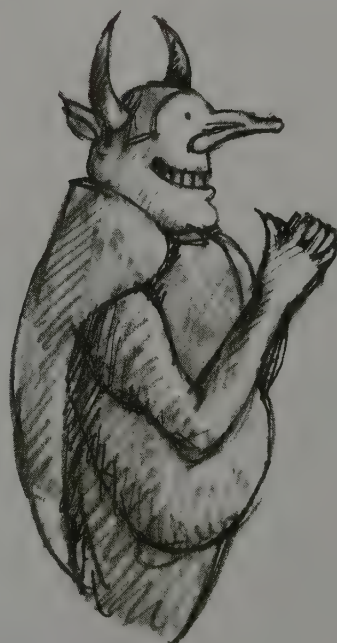


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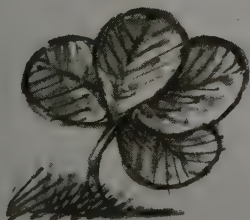
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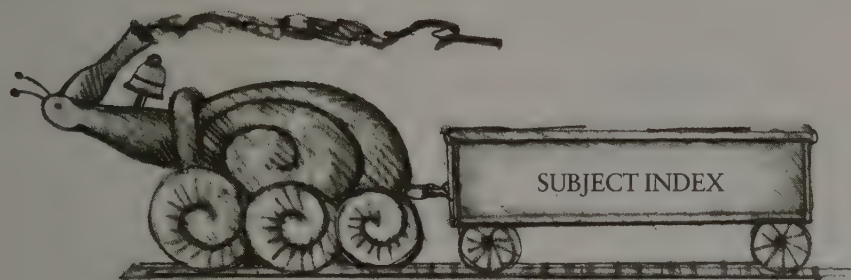
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The following index supplements the table of contents at the beginning of this book. We hope that it will be helpful to *all* those who use this book—especially to teachers as a way of adding the fun and beauty of poetry to a variety of subjects in the school curriculum and to special events throughout the year. Creating this index was a selective process. We felt it would be more useful to list subjects that either reoccurred with frequency, such as spring, or highlighted a particular theme or concept, such as imagination, rather than to list every image that appeared in the poems.

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Jack Prelutsky's first collection of poems was published in 1967. His skill as a wordsmith who tickles young funnybones has been increasing with each new volume of his verse. There are now over thirty. Whether creating nonsensical portraits such as those in *The Queen of Eene* or exploring the dark world of *Nightmares*, Mr. Prelutsky creates rhyming images that never fail to delight his readers. Mr. Prelutsky spends much of his time presenting poems to children in schools and libraries throughout the United States. This constant contact with children and their mentors not only nourishes his own work, but it also gives him a keen awareness of poems children respond to and find relevant—knowledge that made him especially qualified to select poems for this anthology.

Arnold Lobel has been delighting children and the young at heart since he first started illustrating children's books in 1961. What he calls "the little world at the end of my pencil" reveals a gentle sense of humor and subtle sensitivity transmitted with craftsmanship. He has now illustrated over seventy books for children, some of which he wrote. Mr. Lobel received the Caldecott Medal for *Fables* in 1981. *Frog and Toad Are Friends* was a Caldecott Honor Book in 1971, and its sequel, *Frog and Toad Together*, was a 1973 Newbery Honor Book. *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, his most ambitious project to date, gives Mr. Lobel an infinite arena in which to display his virtuosity. Poems about nature, holidays, animals, the city, the supernatural—silly poems and serious poems—are all given an added dimension by his art.

## A NOTE OF THANKS

More people than space allows me to name helped make this book a reality. Although unmentioned, they are not unappreciated. I'd like to give special thanks to Janet Schulman at Random House, who recognized the need for a comprehensive new anthology for today's child and worked closely with me in making final choices, as well as Ole Risom, the art director; Jos. Trautwein, the designer; and Arnold Lobel, whose sensitive and exuberant illustrations embellish every page. I'd also like to thank Bill Cole and the many librarians who helped me track down poems and poets, and my wife, Carolynn, for her support. Most of all I'd like to thank the poets whose voices will continue to sing in celebration of life and childhood in this book.

*Jack Prelutsky*

## A NOTE ON THE TYPE

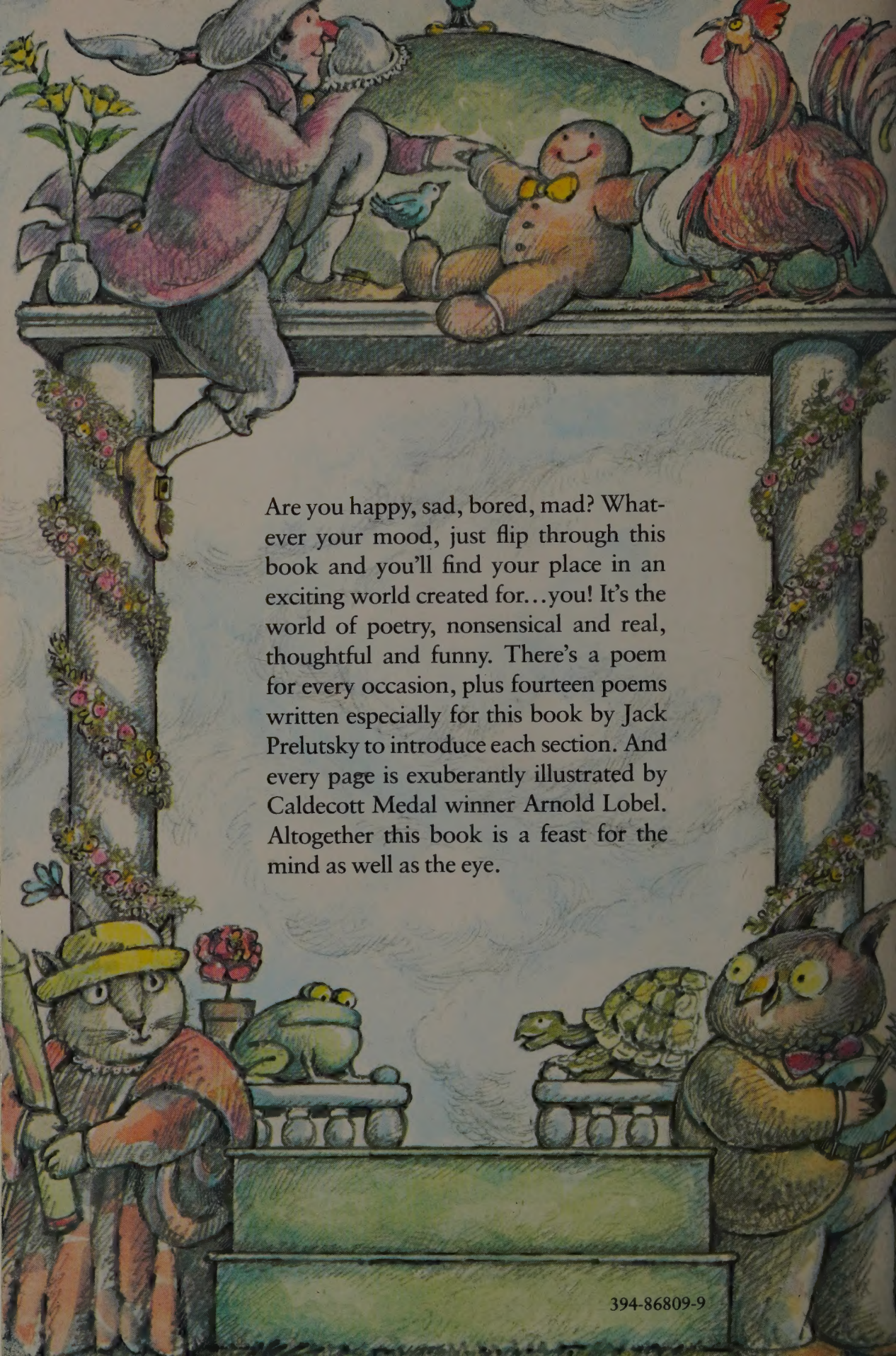
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